

MARRIAGE AMONG /KUNG BUSHMEN

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side. /Gunda sat behind the line of boys, in a deep shadow, to show that he was 'ashamed' and respected (feared, *kaa*) the wedding scherm. 159

One of the boys began to play, not their ceremonial music or special wedding music, but songs of the *//guashi*, as they call them, the little wordless melodies these people compose about happenings in their lives, about pleasures or distress, about their moods. They play and sing these melodies for hours upon hours in the afternoons when they are resting or in the evenings by their fires, and they played for hours that night at the wedding fire. 585 [533]

Soon young guests began to arrive, the children of both werfs with whom /Nai played, all of them younger than the boys who attended /Gunda and the girls who carried /Nai. The youngest guest was the ubiquitous three-year-old boy who never missed anything. No adults came.

One boy brought four mangetti nuts with him and roasted, cracked, and ate them himself. That was all that appeared by way of a feast. Di'ai said that they would like to have given the children something to eat but there was nothing in the werf that night. Even though the others had had something to eat, the bride and groom would have had to abstain. They must not talk or eat, to show they are 'ashamed'. The young guests seemed to enjoy themselves, nevertheless, and were still singing and chatting when I left at midnight.

Soon after sunrise the following morning—/Gunda had already departed—/Nai's mother went to the wedding scherm and sat down beside the embers of the night's fire. /Nai stood shivering beside her in her little genital apron and the duiker skin which women wear around their buttocks and up between their legs, but stripped of her kaross. The mother had brought a little fat (eland fat, if they had it, would be used) and a bit of powdered red stone, one of the red earths (*//gam //gai gwaie*), mixed with fat. She rubbed /Nai all over with the fat, and drew a line on her forehead and a circular design on her cheeks with the red powder mixed with fat. Over in werf 2, Gao, Nai's stepfather, presented /Gunda with a blanket. 291 [291] 825 [825] 302 [302]

This completed the wedding ceremony.

/Nai was a lively child who loved the dancing and singing games the girls play. She often danced alone, tapping her bare feet on a stone in rapid rhythm or making a game of printing a design in the sand with tiny steps. She liked babies and as often as not had her infant half-brother or some very small cousin tied to her back. That morning she appeared to turn into a housewife as though it were her next blithe step. When the women went to gather veldkos, she put on her own little duiker skin kaross, took her digging-stick and went with them. At the end of the day, when they returned in the slanting sunset light, she had two big roots. She went straight to her own fire, blew on the embers, added wood, and sat down. Three ostrich egg shells full of water and her digging-stick were her household goods. These she arranged beside the scherm. /Gunda came and sat down opposite her. She smiled at him and set the roots in the ashes to cook. 159 462 [222] 415 [415]

It has been said in talks with informants that the bridegroom must bring an antelope which he himself has killed to the parents of the bride before the wedding, but no animal had been brought; there had not been a scrap of meat in the werf for days. I asked Di'ai about this. 'Oh, that,' she said in effect. 'Yes, he should give me an antelope, but we thought we would have the wedding first and that /Gunda would 159 183 585

[6 cont.]

101 account refers only to the latter.

821 [77] The sky is designated by them as !nanu áiba Éroba
Kharésa ("rain house of god").

776 For god they have the expressions "Erob" and "X'amab".
775 only "Erob" is used in prayers. X'amab (1) has been preserved

1. X indicates a very low guttural click,
for which I know of no notation.

in X'amá //gu Khe = "people who are with god," in other words,
the souls of the deceased in heaven. Everyone goes there, the
good as well as the bad. Erob has no wife and no children. A
human being has only one soul (!gau-ba). This soul goes to the
heavenly house and remains there "until Erob makes new people
from it." Here is a belief in the transmigration of souls, which,
it must be admitted, is not thought through any further.

No spirits of the dead remain on earth. There are little
776 bush spirits, the gangorob; they are harmless and do nothing.
There are no evil little spirits. They supposedly know nothing
about Heiseb and /Nawa.

136 The supply of game is ample in the tall dry forests of
the Otjimpolo Veld. There are also fish in the rainy season. The
[825] Bushmen call them "shiba" (Ovambo: oshi or ochi); in other words,
originally they had no word for them.

224 The Bushmen are helpless against the lion (X'oréba).
[825] They leave a region as soon as lions make it unsafe. "There is no
point in hunting them."

The leopard (X'nába) is hunted with dogs (ariba). The
[439] chiefs of Amboland pay a good price for the skin, since little
princes and princesses are not carried in a litter made of cowhide,
but in a leopard skin. The jackal (Khái-eba) and the Löffelhund
(//arúba) [a fox-like wild dog of the subfamily Octocyoninae] are
hunted with enthusiasm. "Aruba" probably corresponds to N.
//arob = striped jackal.

Wild dogs, "Khère," !nube (N. !goub) are preferably
[825] avoided. No notice is taken of the hyena, Khái-lasa (N. heirab).
[262] and it is not eaten. When they come near the camp, it is not a
[767] good sign.

[7 cont.]

222 The honey badger, !uisa (N. !ous), which leads to the
 ● 825 bees, is followed ever so eagerly.

224 The common wild pig (gariba), the kudu (daub), the
 gemsbok X'uaba (N. /gaib), and all the small antelopes are
 hunted. Pits are no longer known, although they used to dig
 them in former times.

If they decide to go hunting, sexual intercourse must be
 (834) avoided the night before. In the evening the hunters go into the
 forest and spend the night there. Before dawn they rise and pray:

(539) Pu, pu, Ero, /nari dsu /ari mate God, tomorrow early we
 receive.

When a piece of game has been killed, one of the
 hunters cuts a piece of flesh from the animal's body and hands it
 to the leader of the hunt. This meat is called am-shái-khe. A
 fire is made, and this piece is placed on it. When it is roasted,
 the leader cuts off a piece and shouts:

(539) Ero, Ero, Ero, ha gore, ha gore Ero, Ero, Ero, eat, eat
i Khe Khandi ô With us flesh.

After a pause:

ha lě a lě ha góre o Khandi ô Come! Come! Let us eat flesh.

Now the roasted flesh is consumed. Nothing is thrown
 away or left behind for Ero.

Then the game is cut up, and everyone goes home with
 his portion.

136 Snakes are not rare, although they are by no means as
 common as in the stony regions of the southwest.

The boa constrictor eats human beings; if it catches a
 Bushman, it starts to consume him at the legs!

132 In spite of the timber forest, the danger of drought is
 821 great. Ero sends rain. When there is a drought, the Bushmen
 731 dance and pray:

(539) Ero, Ero, Ero, /ga !goro Ero, Ero, Ero, we are dying of thirst
/ga-wi -ma ta re Water give us.

177 [8] It is very interesting to observe how in these certainly
 776 very ancient hunting and rain prayers the former old heathen gods'
 782 names Huwe and X'amab were replaced by the Christian "Ellob."

I asked the people whether they knew any other prayers
 and received the following answer: "We know very well that

[28 cont.]

535 makes his appearance as the bull of some animal species that the
585 two kin groups especially prize. He takes his place in the row of dancing men. Across from them the women have taken up their position in a long row and accompany the dance by stamping, singing, and clapping their hands. The bride stands among them. She is in no way distinguished from the other women and girls. After a few turns, the bridegroom steps out of the row of men, goes dancing toward the bride, seizes her, and dances back again. The bride then comes from the row of women, clapping her hands, stamping, and singing as she moves toward the bridegroom; without touching him, she turns back, keeping her face turned toward the bridegroom, and rejoins the row of female dancers. With this, the external formality of concluding the marriage in front of many witnesses is over.

583 "It is the young man's duty, however, to leave his paternal
591 kin group for a year and to work for his parents-in-law. This means that any spoils he gets from hunting must be left in his mother-in-law's hut. He, of course, gets his piece during the distribution of the meat, but he is not yet regarded as the actual provider for his young wife, who, as before, receives her share of the meat from her mother, although she searches for veldkost for herself and her husband.

(224) "As a hunter, the man eats only the flesh of the rump.
262 The women and children receive the legs and intestines. Children are not allowed to eat certain parts; for example, a child may not eat the heart of a jackal. The child would not become sick
[825] by doing so, but since the jackal is very cowardly, the child would
[828] also become cowardly.

591 [29] "After the first year of marriage with its obligatory service, the young wife follows her husband to the encampment where the man's father or his kin group resides.

845 "If the child is so weak that it probably will not live,
847 or if it has a physical defect, it is buried alive on the same day, with or without the consent of the father and mother.

553 "The name of the child is given by the father. This is
852 done a few days after birth. The father spits on the child's chest and calls it by name. Others sprinkle it with water from a well.

[33 cont.]

224 has done the shooting must go home immediately and may not speak, eat, or drink, for if the hunter speaks with others, the kudu will not be found for a long time, and if he drinks water, the poison will become watery and will not be effective, and if he eats, the kudu will remain quiet and the poison will not work effectively. The next morning very early we must set out on the trail. The kudu is already dead. The people carry the meat home.

[182] Then it is put on the socha [sacred] fire. The //Gauab must be given some of the meat. Whoever does not do this will be punished by the //Gauab with serious illness, and the people will say: 'That is just. The //Gauab has given him the game, why does he give nothing for //Gauab?' Here, therefore, a true primitival offering is involved.

It is interesting that the Ogowe bury arrows in the sand at various watering places, with the poisoned tip pointing upward; they do this in shady spots that game animals like to use as resting places, and by certain signs, such as tying together blades of tall grass and the like, they set up warnings (Von Zastrow and Vedder).

When a Bushman horde of today is able to hunt down half a dozen large antelopes in a year, it can consider itself lucky.

The porcupine is also commonly hunted, as are the scaly anteater and the fat aardvark, which is very common but difficult to catch. Monkeys are very rare; on the other hand, tree rats make a desirable addition to the diet. The ostrich is not uncommon in open terrain, and ostrich eggs are greatly coveted. Occasionally a boa constrictor, which tastes like a fat fish, or an iguana may round out the menu.

136 Among the animals which are in any way dangerous to human beings, the lion should be mentioned in particular. They occur in great numbers, but rarely stay in one place for a long period of time. A considerable number of Bushmen become their victims, especially in the north. Lions, leopards, hyenas, and jackals are neither hunted nor eaten; the same is true concerning

[165] birds of prey. Eating leopard meat produces fever and eczema,

262 [153] while eating the flesh of birds of prey produces temporary blindness and symptoms of sickness similar to acute sausage poisoning.

Poisonous snakes are not eaten; they are much rarer here than in the stony regions of the central and southern areas, and they do not constitute a noteworthy danger.

[35 cont.]

312 Dolichos seineri Harms (eona), and the Convolvulacea Ipomoea
 824 seineri Pilger (eawa); the enormous tubers of the latter two may
 weigh up to 150 kilograms. Considerably more important for the
 natives than these 'water roots' is the Curcubitacea Citrullus
naudinianus Hook. (orura of the Herero; gab of the Hottentot);
 without their juicy gourds, which occur in great quantities and
 for the most part are edible, most of the central Kalahari would
 be impassable during the dry season, even for the Bushmen."

Further, F. Galton (1) reports:

[113]

1. F. Galton, Tropisches Südafrika, p. 101.

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● 825 "In practice, the first hopeful sign when people are look-
 ing around for water is a flight of guinea fowl; next, following
 the habits of the land, each tree is carefully examined until a
 parrot is sighted, an object visible even at a great distance be-
 cause the bird likes to sit on the uppermost branches. A parrot is
 rarely more than half an hour away from water, and the same
 applies to baboons. If one proceeds with careful observation and
 takes a probable direction, he will see doves flying about; then
 little birds are found in all the bushes, and they are close to it."

10. The Veldkost

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776 Just as //Gauab accompanies the hunter on the chase, he is
 also the companion of the women who go to look for veldkost. If
 //Gauab takes delight in a woman, he will break the bones of an
 animal, killing it, and will lead the woman to it. If, however,
 //Gauab is angry at a woman and she finds no veldkost, then she
 becomes angry, gets up early in the morning, abuses //Gauab, and
 then takes medicine and washes her face so that //Gauab will not
 recognize her. Then she goes into the veld and finds something.

[782]

222 //Gauab receives no offerings from the veldkost. The celebration
 of the first fruits of the veld described by Vedder is no longer held.

[887]

The oldest woman is brought to eat samples of each type of
 veldkost that is brought home for the first time in the year. Then
 the second oldest woman takes a taste, and so on down the line.

[47 cont.]

752 burn the wounded person at many places on his body. When the poison smells the warmth, it gathers at these places; incisions are then made there, and the blood is sucked out by means of a cupping glass made of gemsbok horn. The wounded person may neither sit nor lie down; he must be walked about for twenty-four hours. After this time he either dies or is cured. The method helps only in rare cases.

751 Snakebite is the second great danger. If one makes an
824 incision in the lower part of the calf and rubs scrapings from a
825 bisob root into it, the snakes smell this and do not come out of hiding. [Fig. 18 appears here.] When a person has to run great distances, bisob dust is mixed with fat and applied

752 to the legs. In case someone is nevertheless
(411) bitten by a snake, the treatment is analogous to that used for arrow wounds. Injuries to the feet caused by thorns are very common. Injuries that pass through the aponeurosis are regarded as deadly. They practically always become infected. Even though wound infections take a less malignant and a slower course than among Europeans, they nonetheless sometimes lead to death. The only medicine
(278) used is bisob powder scattered in the wound.



Fig. 18. Kirri of the !Kung.

756 Some doctors claimed to be immune
751 to snake and scorpion bites.

What Vedder observed among the Bergdama is reported in a similar manner by Schinz:

"With the intention of testing the latter characteristic, I one day persuaded an old sorcerer visiting us in Noi !as on Ngami Lake to undertake an experiment with 12 scorpions (Buthus randus Simon) picked out by myself and having an average length of eight centimeters. In order to prevent any possibility of deception, I put the animals on the various parts of his body with tweezers, on the hands, legs, arms, mouth, and testicles. As a rule they then immediately and excitedly moved the long postabdomen back and forth and jabbed violently once or twice into the flesh of the guinea

[52 cont.]

773 Concerning the moon, I was told: "The moon was also
 821 carried by people. It was not as warm as the sun, but very heavy.
 So the men helped each other, and with great difficulty they
 brought it to the huts. The moon was a man. He said: 'I prefer
 to remain alone and do not wish to be among you.' Thereupon the
 Bushmen said: 'If you go alone into the desert, you will surely
 die.' But the moon did not obey, went out, and died. But then
 it woke up again and rose like the sun; therefore, like the latter,
 it is from the 'Great Captain.' When it disappears, it has died.
 When only one side of it is visible, then it is young. When it be-
 comes smaller, then it is old. The color of the moon comes
 from its gall (/gǝo)."

The well-known story of the moon and the hare is told
 there as follows:

The moon once said to the hare: "I die and wake up
 again, you on earth should do the same." But the hare answered:
 "No, we cannot do that, we who are on earth, only you can do
 that because you are in the air, among us this is impossible; once
 we die, we do not wake up again." And the hare was right; it is
 still so today.

821 The eclipse of the moon, !nui dsao, is caused by the lions
 ●(825) so that they can more easily steal into the Bushman huts.

[53] Comets, X u !gam, are stars of the great captain;
 (777) they bring luck. When a shooting star, ʔgomma, falls, it is said,
 [787] just as among us, that someone has died. The stars are the camp-
 [775] fires of those spirits who at the command of the great captain
 come down and fetch the souls of the dying.

(823) Earthquakes, X'áno !gee, are omens of sickness. The
 (787) rainbow, !khāni !nǎo, indicates a good year for rain.

(782) What the Bushman begs and prays for is not sunshine but
 [776] rain. The great captain alone dispenses rain.

Lightning and thunder are not beings in themselves, but
 are caused by rain. When someone is killed by lightning, it is
 said: "The rain has killed him." When there are flashes of
 lightning and thunder at a distance, the rain is saying: "Today
 I shall thunder over the whole earth." When there are flashes of
 lightning and thunder on various sides, the clouds are speaking to
 one another. And when they touch each other with their heads, the

[58 cont.]

[113]

Specimens of Bushmen Folklore, London,
1910-11, pp. 10-13.

776 be especially significant. The !Kung at that time told of a being called /Chue, who transforms itself in turn into various fruit trees and veldkost plants, into a Herero, etc. One day he transformed himself into a //gui tree, his wife ate of it, the tree disappeared, and /Chue changed into a fly. Another time he even became a waterhole, then again a gecko; at night [59] he always changes back into a little human being. The Herero look for him, but cannot find him. /Chue then makes a fire and dies. His father sees this and then moves to his homeland on a large mountain called //Noa. We shall probably not go wrong if we identify this /Chue with Huwe. This Huwe, as is known, is sometimes equated with the great captain X'u. In this old setting he also has distinct traits of Heiseb.

782 The !Kung who were W.H.J. Bleek's informants were also
[534] familiar with a prayer song addressed to the new moon. In accompaniment, they blew on trumpets made of antelope horns. (Bleek-Lloyd, ibid., p. 15.)

787 The old !Kung called the prophesy sticks /Chu, which evidently is the same name again as that of the great captain and is in agreement with Dornan's report concerning the Masarwa that Modimo himself spoke from the prophesy sticks.

755 Vedder reports that in case of illness a messenger is sent
769 to an ancestor's grave and prays: A dsi-dsi mi !hâ tî X'ai-a?
(Why is my son ill?) /nu /kôa (to live in health).

774 While my informants denied the presence of any animistic
● 825 conceptions, the old !Kung believe that certain snakes, lizards,
775 and antelope found in the vicinity of graves represent spirits of the
171 dead (1), as they do among the Bantu.

1. W.H.J. Bleek and L.C. Lloyd,
ibid., p. 430.

[63 cont.]

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[178] termite hills, sometimes in rock fissures, and commonly Betschuana [Tswana] style, in lateral niche graves. Besides food and water, a man's weapons are put in the grave with him, and for a woman, some ostrich eggs.

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777 Now for the world view of the Masarwa. As Dornan reports, Thora is the very great one who [64] is above all things. He sends the rain and the game, veldkost and hunting luck. They commonly invoke Thora for luck on the hunt and thank him when they have had it (1).

(113)

1. P. Schebesta, "Die religiösen Anschauungen Südafrikas [The Religious View of South Africa]," Anthropos, XVIII-XIX, 1923-24.

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[224]
[782] Chapman reports that Bushmen who once had killed a rhinoceros sprinkled some dust on the animal's tail and eyes and at the same time murmured words of thanks to Thora.

The Bushmen are not entirely clear as to whether Thora is a spirit or not; in any case they have great respect for him. They believe that Thora makes all things, but they do not know where he lives or whether he is a person. The western tribes primarily use the word Huwe. The Tati, however, also know this word and regard Huwe as a good spirit who keeps away sickness, gives abundant food, and protects the Bushmen in times of danger. They call [782] upon him when in need. The Sansoquie say, Huwe ka hume ie ie [539] (Huwe, come and help us). Huwe, however, seems to be weaker than Thora and must turn to him for help. A Bushman song from Thuli goes: Tho-ra ba Hu-we ie ie (Thora, come to the aid of Huwe).

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[174] Among many Bushman tribes and also among the Hottentot, an evil principle, "Khauna," is known, a concept that stems from the times when the Bushmen and Hottentot were one people. The [173] Kalahari Bushmen are not certain whether Thora or Khauna made the first human beings.

●825 Incidentally, the Kalahari Bushmen believe that men and animals can change their shapes; thus, for example, a person may appear as a leopard. In particular, springboks, baboons, and some snakes are regarded as human beings in another stage of their

[64 cont.]

825 existence. The appearance of the ring-necked snake indicates
[787] misfortune.

774 Animistic conceptions are more pervasive in the world
picture of the Masarwa (2). According to Dornan, each thing is a

821 2. The Kalahari Bushmen (Dornan, op. cit.,
p. 165) have some knowledge of the stars.
The Southern Cross is a giraffe, but the
Cape Bushmen regard it as a group of lions.
Some of the Bushmen regard the stars as ani-
mals or human beings who have gone up to
the sky.

773 The following story is told: During the
girls' initiation a girl who possessed magical
powers nodded to some lions and they were
immediately transformed into stars.

The Cape Bushmen told another story:
During the girls' initiation a girl was quarreling
with her mother because the latter refused to
give her certain roots that may not be eaten
at such times. The girl seized the roots and
the ashes and threw them toward the sky. The
roots became stars, the ashes became the
Milky Way. -- Shooting stars signify mis-
fortune.

774 kind of spirit. Human beings and animals can each transform
[825] themselves into the other. Individual doctors change into leopards,
and many animals are regarded as other appearances of man,
especially the springbok, the baboon, and a number of snakes.
When a ring-necked snake approaches a village, it indicates
[177] death. Bantu influence is undoubtedly at work here.

[184] The !Kung doctrine of two souls reappears in a different
774 form among the Masarwa. The shadow of each thing, as well as
775 that of the human being, is its other soul. They believe that the
shadow soul remains in the vicinity of the grave, while the self
walks in another place where it meets with the fathers. It is sup-
posed to be warm there, and supposedly there is much game. In
THE BEYOND ONE ACTS THE SAME AS ON THIS
EARTH.

[64 cont.]

600 the beyond one acts the same as on this earth. Like the Namib
769 Bushmen, they throw little stones on the graves and at the same
time pray that the spirit of the deceased may bring them luck
(Dornan, op. cit., p. 146).

787 Conceptions concerning dreams are tied in with the Lulu
(174) doctrine of conscience. In a dream the other self speaks with the
dreamer, and this may be good or bad. The other self may be in-
fluenced by enemies and thus do harm to the twin soul.

According to Dornan, the Bantu adopted the oracle sticks
from the Bushmen. Every Masarwa carries four or five pieces
with him. The female pieces are longer and narrower than the
● (825) male pieces. They are made from the hoofs of small mammals,
(824) from wildebeest bones, and fruit kernels. The names of the four
sticks are: Chowe, Kao, Daua, Gaichwe. The Masarwa believe
(776) that [65] Thora and Huwe, and perhaps also Khauma, speak
through these bones, and Mackenzie (1) states that the Bushmen

[113] 1. Ten Years North of the Orange River,
p. 136.

had designated these bones as morimo aa'me (things of God).

The shoulderblade of the springbok is also used for divina-
tion by the Masarwa.

606 Among the Masarwa the mother-in-law may not look at
551 her son-in-law and may not mention his name. The wife may say
602 neither the name of her husband nor the names of his relatives.

Finally, concerning the Swamp Bushmen of the Okovonggo
105 delta, J. Seiner reports:

101 "The Tannekwe have summer and winter villages, as well
as boats and goats, and engage in agriculture, fishing, and hunting.
(563) The latter occupations are practiced by the pure Bushmen, whereas
half-breeds and the pure Mambukuschu, who were stolen as chil-
dren and reared by the Bushmen, occupy themselves with agricul-
ture and subordinate tasks.

"The number of racially pure Bushmen among the Tannekwe
(144) may be as high as 60 per cent, but as a result of the slight increase
of true Bushmen, which they try to equalize by stealing the
Mambukuschu children, they are undergoing a steady decrease,
AND RACIAL MIXTURE IS PROGRESSING RAPIDLY.

AVIN
NARON
06 AU

[74 cont.]

one time as a man and at another time as a woman.

7. Medicine

757 The curing practices of the Nogau Bushmen are very primitive. They have nothing for snakebite and nothing for arrow poison.

278 Eland fat is a universal medicine. For the common eye inflammations this fat is smeared into the eye; for headaches warm eland fat is dripped into the ear; for a cold the nostrils and nose are smeared with eland fat.

753 Sicknes comes either from the evil head Gauab or from sorcerers. The ailment is caused by a little Gauab who has settled
[754] in the body. The more gravely ill a person is, the more Gauana have entered into him. The doctors are able to draw out these
755 spirits of sickness; they do it in a fashion analogous to that practiced by the !Kung. There are also female doctors.

753 The spirits of sickness are regarded here as much more material than among the !Kung; such a Gauab looks like a human
756 being, but he may also appear as a lion, a wildebeest, or a snake. Once the Gauab has been drawn out of the body, it runs away and speaks to no one.

756 The sorcerers in particular like to transform themselves into lions. Among the Bushmen farther north [75] it is supposedly
[755] the case that when they see a wildebeest in the bush, for example, it is not a wildebeest at all, but a Gauab. The doctors receive their power from the highest Gauab (/gaua //gaicha). He is the one who appears in the wind spouts. As among the Bantu, the doctors must go to school for several years with older colleagues.
[754] They are not only able to cure, but also to practice magic in the bad sense, in that they induce /Gaua //gaicha to make ill anyone whom they want to harm.

"Whoever wants to become a sorcerer must go to school with another witch doctor. When someone is struck by lightning, it is said that Gauab struck him down with his knife. Some then become great doctors and often speak with Gauab. Gauab also comes as a wind spout."

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AUIN
NARON
NOGAU

[78 cont.]

000 it with the fingers. [Fig. 29 appears here.]

224 [79] The lion is neither eaten nor hunted. The jackal and
262 leopard are eaten, as is the liver of the latter. Baboons are not
825 eaten, because they were formerly Bushmen.

304 The line of tattooing between the eyebrows make people
302 into leopards among the Nogau. The Naron smear themselves
with red and black color. The other incisions and tattooing are
made purely for adornment.

825 Among the Naron, millepedes are regarded as creatures
756 of Hise, and only doctors may touch them and make medicine
of them. Among the Nogau and Auin there are magical bones
787 that are used to predict the future. The Naron also believe that
(172) the rock engravings stem from //gauwa.

Among the Auin it is forbidden to eat hyena flesh, and
262 likewise the flesh of the shabrack jackal because it is a dog.

The following important data supplied by Gentz (1) should

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[114]
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1. "Einige Beiträge zur Kenntnis der
südwestafrikanischen Völkerschaften
[Some Contributions to Knowledge of
the Southwest African Tribes], " Globus,
Vol. 83, 1903.

be added:

"I have repeatedly found Bushman arrows on which the
point, usually made of bone (for the most part ostrich bone), was
made of wood. The game sling, reproduced in Figure 29, is
constructed as follows: A strong string, four to five millimeters
thick, which at one end terminates in a simple loop, is fastened
at the other end to a flexible young tree or branch that is bent
far over. A small, thinner string with a transverse stick is at-
tached at the loop end. The string is placed around a small post
driven into the ground at an angle, and it is prevented from
slipping off by means of a flat piece of wood buried under the
ground and planted against the free end of the transverse stick;
the sling is placed in a circle on the ground over the flat piece
of wood. The game, which follows its customary track to the

/253 cont. /

224 the large bullfrog, whose bass voice resounds in all the puddles during the rainy season.¹ The flesh of the frog is boiled with the
252 skin and bones, pounded to a paste in wooden vessels, and then eaten. Among the insects, grasshoppers and termites are used for
222 food. Both are roasted. In the brief time that they are winged, the termites are lured in such great numbers to a fire maintained for the purpose of catching them that it is an easy matter for the Bushman to collect a rich booty in a few hours. A special delicacy in the Bushman household is wild honey, which, as I was able to ascertain, is extremely tasty /254/ and is to be found in quantity on the Omuramba omatako as well as in the Kaukau Veld.

825 The bullfrog is called ntchei by the Bushmen (Herero: otjisume), the termite, /ui (Herero: othohumboli).

The vegetable diet naturally changes with the seasons and is
262 quite varied. I shall attempt to give a brief survey, though at
824 the same time I am aware that it can lay no claim to completeness.

1. The chamá or taba (Herero: omatanga). These are the roasted kernels of the Kaffir pumpkin [melon?], widely known here, which produce quite a tasty dish.

2. The //üni (Herero: omarunga); this is the Heikum Bushman name for the palm tree that is common in this region. The edible parts of the tree are the apple-sized fruit, whose skin has a sweetish taste reminiscent of St. John's bread, and the soft interior of the trunk. The latter is a whitish, soft, fibrous pulp, which the Bush-
[252]men prepare by cooking and pounding.

3. A species of white mushroom called naü by the Bushmen, majova by the Herero. The mushroom grows during the rainy season especially along the edges of termite hills; the diameter of its cap reaches about 20 centimeters. It is eaten raw as well as
[252]boiled. I do not know whether it is true that excessive eating of this mushroom has a detrimental effect on mental activity, as the Herero aver - ejova, plural majova, is the Herero word for stupid.

4. The unki, a well-known species of onion, about the size of a hazel nut, called //au by the Bushmen, is very common and forms an important part of the kitchen provisions, not only among the Bushmen, but also among the Herero.

[252] 5. The //guitcha of the Bushmen, ussessenga of the Herero,

N/OW

333

N/ow of the /Kung is something which influences weather, bringing rain if it is 'good' *n/ow*, or cold if it is 'bad' *n/ow*. Precisely what *n/ow* consists of was never made explicit. Nothing about it can be seen. One knows of its existence, the /Kung say, by observing its effects upon the weather.

N/ow exists in all human beings, the /Kung believe, and in certain big animals, namely: giraffe, eland, gemsbok, kudu, hartebeest, and wildebeest. For the sake of brevity I shall refer to these animals as the *n/ow* animals. Small animals do not have *n/ow*, according to the /Kung. We wanted to learn why, but the /Kung could only tell us that they were so created. Steenbok have positively no *n/ow* at all. Some informants claimed that duikers had none, others said that duikers' *n/ow* was undeveloped. Informants were also uncertain about springbok. There are very few springbok in the region and informants said they killed them so seldom that they had not observed whether or not they had *n/ow*. Possibly other large animals would be found to have *n/ow* if the question were further pursued.¹ There was no disagreement among /Kung informants about other things; no other things have *n/ow*—not earth itself, nor vegetation nor other objects on earth; not water, clouds, rain, thunder or lightning, nor heavenly bodies. Not even the two Gods themselves have *n/ow* in them, neither the great one who lives in the eastern sky, nor his namesake (his /*ghuma*) who lives in the western sky, both of whom bear the names Huwe, Hishi, and ≠Gao/na, our informants told us.

N/ow gets into a human being in the womb. Exactly how this happens informants could not tell us. It was our impression that they were not hiding information, they seemed willing enough to talk about *n/ow* and said it was not dangerous or harmful in any way to speak freely about it. We think they simply did not know. One informant said, 'The child gets the *n/ow* in the womb and is born with it.' Another said, 'The *n/ow* is created in the womb.' Another said, 'The great Creator gives the *n/ow* and taught the people to do the things they do about it. He made all things and made all things to be known.' The *n/ow* acquired in the womb remains in a person all his life.

Some persons get a 'good' rain-bringing *n/ow*, others get a 'bad' cold-bringing *n/ow*. When we wanted to learn how this happened we were told that 'When the mother's uterine fluid flows into the ground, it makes a *n/ow* in the child which brings rain or a *n/ow* which does not bring rain'.

The mother has no voluntary control over this, nor has anyone else; and there is nothing, like medicine or magic, spell or ceremony, which can be used to cause the *n/ow* to be one kind or the other. Furthermore, the child does not inherit a good or bad *n/ow* from his mother or father or any ancestors. The philosophy, lore, or belief about the question of what causes the *n/ow* to be one or the other kind, whatever it may have been in the past, seems not to be known now with clarity or detail.

Two verbs were used in connexion with *n/ow*: to ≠*gani* and to //*ghui*. The /Kung say that the mother has ≠*gani*(ed) the child if it gets a good *n/ow* and has //*ghui*(ed) it if

¹ Miss Lucy Lloyd (*A Short Account of Further Bushman Material, Third Report*, London, 1889, p. 19) mentions that a Bushman informant, Dialkwain by name, who worked with her and with Dr. Bleek before his death, and who came from the Katkop Mountains, south of the Orange River, told

her that 'A baboon, when killed, resembles a man, in "making cloud"'. No more information was given in the report, but the concept of 'making cloud' suggests that possibly the now extinct or almost extinct Cape Bushmen had a belief which may have resembled in some ways the concept of *n/ow*.

about it to others, unless it were a hunter caught in a storm alone in the veld; but an individual, even without necessarily expressing a consensus, we think might say to another, 'Why don't you burn some of your hair?', which would probably be enough to instigate the act. And, in all likelihood, it would be done with so little formality that the observer would not know anything was happening unless he knew what to watch for and were alerted.

[171] There was no ceremony regularly performed by the /Kung of Nyae Nyae to ensure [821] plentiful rain, like the Hottentots' *gari-~~ab~~*. The Rain dance of the /Kung, which is danced often, all through the year, is a medicine dance, among several others, such as the Giraffe, Sun, Gemsbok, Honey, and Mamba dances. All these are 'strong' things, the /Kung believe. The dances so named have 'strong' medicine music. They are danced during the medicine men's ceremony to cure the sick and protect the people and drive away any of the *//gana*, the spirits of the dead, who might be lurking to bring some evil upon the people. The Rain dance has this as its purpose, not the control of weather.

One night when the Rain dance was being beautifully danced with a fine precision and vigour of clapping, singing, and stamping, which to us suggested fervour, we were watching it so intently that we had not noticed the sky. The first storm of the season had crept up behind us and suddenly burst over us like a bomb. We asked [82] Gao if he believed the dance had brought the rain. He said that the rain was due to come. The dance had not brought it.

821 A *n/ow* animal, as well as a human, has either a good or a bad *n/ow*, but it seems not to be known clearly how it gets the one or the other. Good or bad *n/ow* is not correlated with one sex or one species. One giraffe, for example, either male or female, may have the rain-bringing, another the cold-bringing kind.

It seems that long or short horns may have something to do with good or bad *n/ow*, not the long-hornedness of gemsbok as compared with the short-hornedness of giraffes, but, within the species, the comparative length of horn. But one kind of *n/ow* is not inherent in short-hornedness nor is the other kind in long-hornedness. It is not so simple as that. And informants did not know what association, if any, the short or long horns may have with ~~the~~ Toma's vague idea that the short or long legs of a child in the womb might have something to do with the child's *n/ow*.

When a hunter kills a *n/ow* animal, he either ~~gani~~(s) or *//ghui*(s) it. Like the mother who ~~gani~~(s) or *//ghui*(s) her child at birth, the hunter has no voluntary control over this and cannot tell which he has done unless the effect is observed in the weather. A hunter with good or bad *n/ow* may ~~gani~~ or *//ghui* an animal which has either good or bad *n/ow* and long or short horns. The precise nature of the interaction remains obscure, but hunters took an interest in telling about the kind of *n/ow* they thought they had, and gave instances of observing the effects of their killing various types of animals. If a man should kill a female kudu with short horns and the water should freeze that night, it would be evident that he had *//ghui*(ed) the animal. He would expect to continue to *//ghui* short-horned female kudus. However, although a man's *n/ow* remains constant throughout his life, the way it interacts with other factors may change, and after a time he may find he has begun to ~~gani~~ short-horned female kudus. We think the /Kung became a little tired of our finding this complicated.

One day in September the sun blazed in the clear sky. The heat beat down upon us.

N/OW

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A party of /Kung men had gone hunting towards the west. John, our son, was with them. In the afternoon there appeared in the western sky three little white clouds, like three powder-puffs in a neat row. They were the first clouds to be seen since the big rains had ended in March. We ran to each other, pointing them out. People felt happy. In the evening, when the hunters returned, ≠Toma came at once to me, before he put down his bow and quiver, and said that I could see for myself what it meant to ≠gani an animal. John had ≠gani(ed) the wildebeest he shot, and the clouds had appeared immediately above them. ≠Toma said this was what he had been trying all along to explain to me.

If a hunter knows with certainty that he has ≠gani(ed) or //ghui(ed) an animal, as it was known when John killed the wildebeest that he had ≠gani(ed) it, he may take the horns and the scalp and forehead bone and hang them in a tree, remembering where they are and whether they had been ≠gani(ed) or //ghui(ed): If need should arise he could get the horns which were appropriate to the need and burn them in a specially made fire away from the cooking-fires. He would take a piece of the burning horn and point it to the sky saying 'goichi goichi goichi n/ow qui'. This we were told is 'speaking n/ow'. The interpreters did not know and could not find out by questioning people what the words mean. We wonder if they are an archaic spell. The horns must be entirely consumed by the fire.

In *Bushman Folklore*¹ there is a reference to the burning of horns in a very interesting myth about the Rain Bull, related to Dr. Bleek in 1878 by a Bushman from Strontbergen (30° S., 22° E.) whose dialect included the fifth click of the southern group, as the Katkop dialect does. In this myth a young woman cleverly saves herself from being carried away on the back of the Rain Bull to the water-pit where she would have been turned into a frog, and all of her people also would have become frogs. At the end of the myth the informant who related it said, 'The old women who had been out seeking food were those who came to burn horns, while they desired that the smell of the horns should go up, so that the Rain should not be angry with them.'

A hunter has another way of controlling the weather. To bring rain he would cut the throat of an animal he had reason to believe he habitually ≠gani(ed), or to stop rain, one he habitually //ghui(ed). The blood, which is ordinarily saved and eaten, would be allowed to flow on to the ground. A giraffe is the best animal for blood-letting. The forms and colours of the clouds are like giraffes, the /Kung remarked. We asked if human beings cut themselves and used their blood to start or stop rain as they do their urine or hair. The /Kung said, No, they did not. That would be unnecessarily painful.

As far as we know the /Kung did not attempt to control the weather by these means while we were with them, as they did not resort to burning urine or hair of persons. Perhaps this was because the weather took its normal, expected, seasonal course. Furthermore, we did not experience its most severe extremes for very long periods, and found it on the whole quite bearable. Or perhaps the concept of controlling weather by means of burning urine, hair or horns or letting blood, exists more in lore than in active practice. Or perhaps the long unchanging months do not stimulate the idea of actively attempting to control weather and the people content themselves with explaining rather than controlling. They appeared in many instances to have the

¹ Bleek and Lloyd, op. cit., pp. 193 ff.

- x137 *triloba* they are what is known as dorsifixed, that is they are fixed a little way up from the base so that the stipule is free at both ends. The flowers are the same size in the two species and have the same long stalk, but those of *Vigna triloba* are predominantly purple. They tend to open in the early morning and to close during the heat of the day.

Vigna triloba is reported from a variety of soils and is widespread through southern Africa, but it was not seen on the expedition until the Nama Pan area was reached.

- 262
[252] It has a finger-thick tap-root which is edible after boiling or roasting, although fibrous and slightly bitter. In mature plants it may extend downwards further than can conveniently be dug, but it is easily broken off. There appear to have been no previous records of its use as a food plant.

- x137 *Commiphora pyracanthoides* Engl. (5137) Photograph 23.

Bawern Ikha Bushman n/fo

A deciduous, rigid, twiggy two-foot shrub with spine-tipped twigs, branches that curve downwards, and a bark that is pale green and flaky on the older parts and grayish on the young twigs. The flowers are less than a quarter of an inch long and inconspicuous, and are borne in bunches on small knobs scattered along the twigs. Male and female flowers are on separate plants. The knobs also bear the leaves, which appear after the flowers and are glaucous, simple and finely serrate, and about three quarters of an inch long and half an inch wide. The fruits are "ovoid, about the size of a green pea, though reddish brown when ripe. When the fruits are ripe, the fleshy covering may be easily split apart in two halves exposing the black seed with a red aril covering it partly at the base and extending in four slender 'fingers', producing an intriguing pattern". (Codd, 1951:87.)

The species extends from South West Africa to the northern Transvaal, but was uncommon in the area round Nama Pan. One specimen collected there was grown in Pretoria. Leaves and flowers were obtained in the summer following, and from this material the determination was made possible.

- [262]
312
824 The plant exudes an edible gum from injuries and is a useful source of water in an emergency, the water being in a sappy underground organ which is like that of one of the following species of *Commiphora*, No. 4994. It is known as a water plant among the Bantu of the Transvaal as well.

- x137 *Commiphora* spp. (4994 edible, 5030 inedible).

4994
!h5: Bushman.. d3a
!gikwe Bushman d3a
Naron Bushman |uri

5030
!gikwe Bushman !ana

Two species of *Commiphora* were collected in the Kalahari south of Ghanzi. They were completely deciduous rigid two-foot shrubs with many sharply-tipped twigs and a flaky bark. At first sight they were identical, and even close examination revealed no bigger difference than that one of them was a little more of a thicket than the other and slightly grayer. The Bushmen, however, stated emphatically that the grayish one

- 8.24
[278] was poisonous and the other not. They said also that the grayish one
[825] WAS THE MOST OF THE INSECT WHICH THEY USE FOR
MAKING THEIR ARROW POISON, AND THAT IT HAD
HARDER ROOTS THAN THE OTHER.

Adansonia digitata L. Photograph 32.

Eastern !khû Bushman *m

The Baobab, as it is commonly called, is shown in photograph 32. Its stem may have a circumference of up to 148 feet, and makes it quite unmistakable. In winter it is leafless but in summer it bears dense dark-green foliage. The flowers are pure white and up to six inches across, and the fruits, as described by Codd (1951: 120) are "oblong or egg-shaped, five to six inches or more in length and three to four inches in diameter, with a woody shell which is softly grey-velvety on the outside".

The southernmost specimens were seen in the neighbourhood of Ghanzi, and from there it occurred sporadically to Gautscha Pan, the furthest point north reached by the expedition. There were big gaps in its distribution and it was rare throughout, but in some parts of the Transvaal it occurs abundantly and may have an unbroken distribution over many square miles of country. It is widely distributed in the drier regions of north and south tropical Africa.

Inside the shell of the fruit is a white, pith-like substance which may be eaten raw, or ground up and stirred into water to make a drink, or boiled to make a porridge. It has an acid-sweet taste. The seeds which are embedded in the flesh are also edible and are eaten like nuts. In other parts of Africa they are prepared in a somewhat involved way which includes protracted boiling, fermenting and drying. There are several records of the fact that the young leaves make quite a good substitute for spinach, but as the expedition was during the winter and as the trees are deciduous, I cannot say whether the Bushmen know of this, nor whether the trees we saw were of the glabrous variety which is the one used for spinach. No seedlings were seen. It is known that the white shoot from the germinating seed can be used as a substitute for asparagus, and that the tender root of the very young Baobab is also edible (Dalziel, 1937: 113). The trees are often hollow, and like *Boscia albitrunca* and *Ricinodendron rautenii* may act as reservoirs for rain water which can be used in times of scarcity. The Bushmen reach it by fitting hollow grass stalks end to end to form a tube, and sucking it out. A further product of the Baobab is a large caterpillar which feeds upon the leaves and which is an important article of food among the Natives of the northern Transvaal. It is recorded also from South West Africa, and is very likely known to and used by the Bushmen.

Ochna pulchra Hook. (5273) Photograph 33.

Eastern !khû Bushman li and !e:ii

A semi-deciduous tree with a clean but usually rather twisted bole which is white to light gray and has a peeling bark. The branches are bent and rigid and the wood brittle. They bear glossy light green alternate leaves which are almost sessile and usually entire, rarely with a very finely toothed margin. The tree has an attractive appearance even in winter, and the young leaves add to this in the spring for they range from pale green to reddish-brown. The flowers are borne in early summer, in showy scented bunches. They have yellow petals and a green calyx, which persists after the petals have fallen and turns bright red. The fruits are hard and green when immature but turn fleshy and black as they ripen. There are usually two or three, the size and shape of small beans, attached to a fleshy red swelling in the centre of the flower. The leaves have been suspected of causing poisoning in stock, but tests carried out on mammals have so far been inconclusive. (Uys and Thomas 1952, Steyn, 1949: 125.)

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137X

The Bushmen

35

Bushmen believe that certain famous sorcerers, once medicine men who chose to be poisoners and magicians instead of healers, have taken the form of certain lions, which can always be distinguished from ordinary lions by their great size and their ability to float in the air. Also, Bushmen say, the eclipses of the moon are caused by lions, as on very bright nights a lion may cover the moon's face with a great paw, giving himself darkness for better hunting. ⁷⁵⁴ ⁸²⁵ [32]

Usually, when a lion sees you, he skulks away or bounds off in great, ungainly leaps, in clumsy dodges, making a fool of himself because he is frightened; but when one raises his head and looks right at you, then turns as this one did, and walks off without even looking back, you understand at once why Bushmen believe the things they do. ¹³⁶

As the lion walked away into a thicket of acacia trees we climbed off the truck and followed him. It was rash of us, but we were not afraid of him. We wanted a photograph. However, he had disappeared, and as we were looking cautiously around among the trunks of little trees we heard a motor roaring, gears grinding; and finally, as we watched, the jeep arrived with Cass and Bob (Dr. Story), who told us to go back to camp as fast as we could. Two Bushmen had arrived.

We started back at once and got there late in the afternoon, ⁶⁰⁹ and there we found them, two small men, one old, one young, in silhouette as they squatted by the fire, turning as we came to look at us, very nervous and very ill at ease. They had been given food and tobacco—a blue cloud hung above their heads—and a bucket of water, but during the course of the afternoon they had drunk the bucket dry. As Theunis and Gishe, the only people who could have spoken to both them and us, had been away, the rest of the expedition had had to wait anxiously for our return, unable to communicate a single word.

576 show affection openly only to people of the same sex and
593 to their children. Tsetchwe looked at Gai, though, and she
smiled.

124 . Twikwe greeted us by smiling her wry smile and saying:

825 "So."

262 The springbok was thrown to the ground, but before it
could go into the pot, Bill Donnellan, the doctor, came over
to the werf to dissect it, this being an opportunity to find
what the Bushmen thought about the systems of the body
and what they knew about anatomy.

Gai agreed to tell what he knew, so the springbok was
dragged to a sandy spot and a small fire was built—just two
crossed sticks with one or two coals and a tiny flame, yet it
warmed us, as the evening was becoming very cold. All the
people sat around to watch as Bill opened the belly of the
springbok and rolled it onto its back. He pointed to the dia-
phragm and asked what it was. Gai told him the name.
"What is it for?" Bill asked.

"We eat it."

"Is it for anything else?"

"We don't know. We just eat it."

"What about the liver?"

"We eat the liver."

"Does the liver do anything for the springbok?"

"It stays there and then we kill him and eat it."

"And what about the stomach?"

"We Bushmen eat the stomach, too, and all the things in
the springbok."

"Doesn't the stomach do anything for the springbok?"

"Yes, he eats grass which goes in there and makes him fat,
and then we eat the fat."

124
825 Unwilling to give up easily, Bill passed on to the urogenital
system, which is, after all, exterior and which anyone should

The Fire

71

know, but Gai became embarrassed and said gravely that¹²⁴
Pishiboro put that system there for reproduction and he alone⁸²⁵
knew how it worked.

Ukwane then said that he would explain instead, because²²¹
he was an old man. Gai could not speak of sex in front of⁸³¹
women because it was both improper and dangerous and⁷⁸⁴
would weaken his power to hunt, but Ukwane was too old⁸²⁶
for hunting and, besides, was past the age when many of the⁸⁸⁸
tabus concerning sex applied to him. Old Bushmen under-¹²⁴
stand everything better anyway, young Bushmen say.

Ukwane knew a great deal. He named every major part,¹²⁴
inside and out, of the animal, even naming the major veins⁸²⁵
and arteries that lead to and from the heart. We were not sur-
prised to find that Bushmen, who prefer to be specific rather
than general when dealing with minute things, distinguish
more exterior parts of the body than we do. They have names,
for example, for the inside of the elbow and the back of the
knee. The *leg* of an animal means the hind leg, the front leg
is the *arm*, and these are called by the same names as the
arm and leg of human beings. Birds, too, fly with their arms
and land on their legs, but I never could discover what insects
do.

Ukwane went on to explain the various systems of the body,
saying in the case of the urogenital system that liquid, which
was "the little springboks," ran from the testicles into the
kidneys, then down again and out the penis. He stuck to this
version, too, even when Bill suggested that it might be other-
wise. This does not mean that Bushmen think that urine^[842]
causes conception, for they recognize the role of semen, be-
lieving that it unites with the menstrual blood of the mother
to form a child.

Ukwane understood the course of food and water through¹²⁴
the digestive system, but said that food and water spread out⁸²⁷



CHAPTER FIVE

Gai and Ukwane

AT our camp in Ai a ha'o I had a small tent not high¹³⁶ enough to stand in, tied to a very small thorn tree. The tent was made of ragged, waterproof fabric which billowed in and out when the wind blew, and when lit from the inside by a candle at night looked luminous, pale green, like an aquarium or a lantern on the moon. The tent was a shade from the blazing sun at noon and a shelter from the wind, and through the thin canvas I could hear the creatures that passed at night—hares and small buck that made the long grass rustle, and occasionally small predatory animals, such as jackals, whose footsteps make a sound and which sometimes call^[192] "tsa, tsa," their sad, loud cry that means in Gikwe "water, water."

Whenever an animal called, someone would surely answer⁵²⁴ it. People do this for fun, a hobby, answering every animal⁸²⁵ except the lion. In the Kalahari it is considered safer to let the lion have the last word.

I had luckily pitched my tent in the sun, and during the¹²³ long cold period that followed our arrival at Ai a ha'o I was the only person who was warm because the tent kept out the

281 skins with Bakalahari people for tobacco when we had gone and when the tobacco we had given him had all been used. We asked how much he would get and he measured an imaginary pile in the palm of his hand—not much for four or five days' work, although the skins of Delalandes foxes are quite small.

136 There were Delalandes foxes living not far from Ai a ha'o, a colony of them, for they always live together. I saw them often and they were charming creatures, fuzzy with huge ears and black stockings. I have always admired them, for although they have no defenses, can neither run fast nor fight, they are not afraid to go mousing far from their burrows. Then, when they are surprised by a menace, they have to run home, and they start off all together and run and run, humping on and on at an even pace, neither speeding nor slacking, until long after you first saw them they disappear into their holes. They are humble creatures, but persistent and brave. One member of our expedition hunted them for months with rifle and shotgun, trying to get a specimen for a museum in the United States, but I am glad to say he never succeeded. Ukwane caught them, though, the easy way. He set five snares for them at five mouse-runs in the grass; five foxes strangled in the snares, and Ukwane came around the following day to gather them up.

123 We filmed Ukwane working the skins. Then we found the
 825 shoulder blade of the gemsbok we had shot weeks ago still
 321 lying in the werf and we asked Gai to make an arrowhead out
 411 of it so we could film that, too. It was the right kind of bone, the kind that Bushmen use. The small antelope and even some of the larger ones, such as springbok and wildebeest, have bones which are too fragile to penetrate another antelope's heavy hide. Gai agreed to make the arrow; he broke off the scapular spine and pushed it into a fresh tsama melon to

Gai and Ukicene

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let it soak. When it was moist all the way through he called ¹²³ to us and we then filmed him making the arrow. ⁸²⁵

We took a long time setting up the cameras, reading light ³²¹ meters, focusing the lenses, and finally took a picture with the still camera. To our astonishment, when the shutter clicked Gai let out a great huff of breath. One of the interpreters must have told him at some time to be absolutely still, and he had begun holding his breath when he had first seen the camera. We thanked him and told him he need never do it again, but we laughed and he was embarrassed.

Always, Bushmen were wonderful people to film. They were totally unselfconscious, never looked at the camera, and, furthermore, had infinite patience. They would stop what they were doing, wait, start again and repeat what they had done before, making each repeated action seem miraculously as if it were being done for the first time. But on this occasion Gai got bored. He had a quiverful of arrows anyway, and while he waited for us to load the camera the arrow he was working got brittle and dry. When this happened he had to suck it until it was moist again, then whittle some more.

He made the foreshaft of the arrow first, chopping with his knife to hack the rough shape of it, pausing occasionally to hone the knife blade on the tough sole of his foot, then cocking his head and squinting down the blade to see the edge. He then carefully whittled the head, leaving a tiny spine up the middle for strength but shaving the edges so thin that you could see light through them. As he worked, though, he yawned and sighed with boredom and now and then he would pause to sing a nonsense song, "bibibi di bo," by flapping his lower lip with his finger.

When the arrowhead was finished he fitted it into a reed shaft exactly the right size and bound it in place with a bit of fine sinew which he had also sucked to moisten. Then he

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turned the arrow over and over, sighting down its length to see if it was straight. It was.

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Gai then surprised us somewhat by taking from his hunting-bag twelve round nut-like tiny shells which we recognized as the cocoons or pupa cases of the poison grubs, the source of poison for the Bushmen's deadly little arrows. Gai said he would poison his arrow, a process which he seemed to find more interesting than making it, and we said we would be very glad to see. We wondered where he had got the grubs, for he and Ukwane had both told us that there were no poison grubs anywhere near Ai a ha'o, and he said he had received them from the people whom we had met in the Okwa Omaramba, as they had plenty there.

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We regretted very much that we had never seen a tree or shrub that houses the poison grubs of the Gikwe, and that we had never been able to catch one of the adults of the beetle that in its pupa stage is poisonous. Gai said that his grubs came from between the roots of a bush, called in Gikwe simply a poison bush. We do not know if the grubs are the same as the grubs used by Kung Bushmen, which live among the roots of a tree, called by the Kung a poison tree, called by us marula kaffra. The grubs of the Kung are from the beetle *diamphidia simplex*, which lays its eggs on the leaves of the tree. Once, all in one afternoon at a single tree of Kung Bushmen, I was shown by a young hunter the yellow eggs on a leaf, the young larvae just hatched, which the hunter said crawl down the tree under the bark to pupate in the earth among the roots, and the pupae of this beetle.

It has always amazed me that the Bushmen ever discovered these beetles, which are only one species among thousands in South Africa, and which the Bushmen say are poisonous only in their pupa stage. The pupae themselves are

Gai and Ukwane

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enclosed in the tiny brown pupa casings with brittle shells⁸²⁵ like eggshells, exactly the color of the earth around them, and²⁷⁸ are found only among the roots of certain trees and bushes. Nothing edible grows among the roots, and although the *marula kaffra* has edible nuts that drop and are gathered from the surface of the ground, there would be no likely reason for Bushmen to be digging there. Bushmen do eat certain bee-^[262] tles, certain ants, and certain caterpillars, which, they say, are sweet as honey, but even if a Bushman were to eat a poison beetle he would not die (unless he had a cracked lip or an ulcer) because the poison works only in the blood stream, and even the black meat of an antelope taken from the site of the arrow wound can be eaten with impunity.

Only people who pay the closest attention to every tiny object and who investigate all its possibilities could ever have discovered a thing like this.

I not only do not know if the beetles used by the Kung are the same kind as those used by the Gikwe; I also do not know if the Kung use only one kind, for I have seen Kung Bushmen take two kinds of pupa from the roots of the same tree, from cocoons that appeared to be exactly alike. Even the Kung do not know, when they see a cocoon, which kind it is. One kind of pupa is small and pure yellow with a black head, a thorax, an abdomen, and six small legs. The other kind is larger, fatter, and orange, with no noticeable body sections such as thorax and abdomen, but more like a caterpillar, the same all the way down. The yellow pupae, the Bushmen say, are males, with sacks of poison only under their front legs. To get the poison Bushmen pull off a leg and squeeze out a single drop, discarding the rest of the body. The orange pupae are said to be females, with poison throughout the entire body. To get poison from these, Bushmen tap the grub all over to

825 mash the insides, then pull off the head and squeeze the in-
278 sides out like toothpaste from a tube. Both kinds of poison
are equally good, they say.

Perhaps the two types of pupae are the pupae of two differ-
ent kinds of beetles. Perhaps they are from the same beetle
but in different stages of development. Perhaps they really
are males and females, as Bushmen are often scientifically
[821] accurate, but, as Bushmen also have male and female rain
clouds, perhaps not.

[439] Kung Bushmen, who use metal arrows obtained by trading
824 animal skins for wire with the Bantus, have a complicated
825 system of poisoning in which they use several ingredients for
278 the poison paste. One of these is a binding fluid, used be-
cause the pure poison squeezed from the grub will not adhere
well to metal but must be made binding and sticky. The
binding material comes from the bark of a tree. They chew
[415] the bark thoroughly and spit the mash into a little mortar
237 made from the knee bone of an antelope, a nice little cup,
into which the Bushmen have squeezed the milky juice of
sansevieria plants, got by wringing the heavy, thick leaves.
This juice has an irritating effect when it is dissolved in a
wound and causes the antelope to rub and scratch its
wounded spot against a tree, which stimulates circulation in
the area, which carries the poison more quickly through the
body, which hastens death.

The paste in the mortar is thoroughly mixed, then smeared
with a straw on the foreshaft of arrows, never on the head,
for if the sharp edges of the head were poisoned any child
might accidentally nick himself and die. When the arrow is
poisoned it is propped up by a fire and the poison is allowed
to dry into a shiny dark paste, to be melted again by the
411 moisture and warmth of an antelope's flank.

825 Gai had stored his poison cocoons in a tiny bag inside his
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Gai and Ukwane

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hunting-bag, and when he came to poison his arrow he took them all out and felt them, shook them, to see if they were fresh. Then he took his arrow, his cocoons, and a scrap of leather he had been saving which was so thin and ragged it had very little use, and, moving all these things to a place in the grass far away from the werf, he sat down to work. He did not work in the werf because a drop of poison might be spilled and months later would still be dangerous.

Gai first spread out his rag as a work table and arranged his cocoons upon it. Then he called Witabe, who was watching from the werf, and asked for a fire, which Witabe brought in the form of a few sticks in one hand and a live coal from one of the werf fires in the bare palm of his other hand.

At last Gai was ready and his fire burning. After inspecting his fingers carefully for cracks in the skin and telling us to sit upwind from him so that no drops of poison would blow on us, he scratched open one of the cocoons. The shell was as brittle as a little seed pod. It opened easily and Gai fished inside carefully with a straw, dragging out the grub, which struggled feebly with one slight, almost imperceptible convulsion and then lay alive but motionless, curled in a U on the palm of Gai's hand. The cocoon was small and the grub must have filled it entirely, for, once outside, the grub seemed twice as large as its casing. It was a yellow one, like the kind the Kung call males, but I cannot say for certain that it was exactly the same.

Gai laid it across his thumbnail and tapped it gently, mixing the insides. Then he twisted off the head, squeezed the body, forced the paste inside onto the shaft of his arrow, and smeared it evenly with his straw. Gikwe Bushmen do not have to use a binding fluid, for their bone arrows hold the poison very well.

After the foreshaft was coated evenly all around with the

411 poison of several grubs, Gai dried the arrow by the fire, then
 ● 825 coated the foreshaft again. In all, he used ten grubs, all that
 278 he had except two which were found to be shriveled and
 dead. The last coating he did not smear; pulling off the grub's
 head, he dotted the arrow with little spots of poison. He did
 not poison the arrowhead but only the foreshaft.

When the arrow was finished and the poison dried to lacquer on the shaft, Gai carefully collected all the cocoons and all the grub skins and burned them in the fire, keeping out of the smoke. He then called for a fresh tsama melon, which Witabe brought him and which he used to wash his hands. At last he put his arrow in his quiver and lit his pipe. He was through.

411 While we were there with the camera set up and loaded
 184 we asked Gai to demonstrate for us the way he would shoot a bow, which he did, and we were surprised to see that the Gikwe, who use bows of the same size and shape and arrows of the same size as the Kung's, have a different arrow release. The Kung grip the arrow between the thumb and the side of the forefinger as they draw back on the string, but Gai gripped it between the first two fingers, holding his thumb back. He said that all other Gikwe do the same.

283 Ukane called to us from the werf and said that since we were here he would show us how a Gikwe Bushman makes a string. We went over to him, and he did make a string for us by pulling the tough fibers out of aloes and rolling them together on his thigh, leaving just enough fiber unwound at the end to splice with the next rolled section. The string was so strong that when he jerked it between his hands it neither broke nor raveled. It took him only a few minutes to make it, [286] and he said that when he had many such strings he would tie them together to make himself a net.

As he worked, for the sake of efficiency, he held the fibers

578 bands, who at the time were barely out of earshot. One story
522 concerned Dasina, how she had fainted from smoking too
152 much the day we had come, and to show exactly what had
happened, Wite and Witabe acted the scene, Wite taking the
part of Dasina and fainting on Witabe's shoulder while the
other boys laughed. Bushmen's jokes and stories are usually
funny at the expense of a person, an animal, or the god Pishi-
boro, maliciousness being one way in which Bushmen rid
themselves of their resentments.

536 Somewhat later Wite and Giamakwe acted for the others
831 the scene of the hyena's mating, as they imagined it or knew
● 825 it to be, for the night it had happened only the sound had
reached us and the hyenas had not been seen. Giamakwe
took the part of the male hyena, Wite took the part of the
female. First they walked together on all fours and rubbed
faces, and then Giamakwe climbed on Wite's back, emitting
a lonesome howl just like the howl we had heard. It was not
meant to be funny, and the other boys watched it calmly,
treating the mating of hyenas as a matter of course. All in
all, it was a majestic imitation, with snarls and growls, then
mounting and pretending to copulate with shivering and
ecstasy, then more growls, until finally the male fell away ex-
hausted and curled up on his side, whereupon the female at-
tacked him. It took a long time from start to finish, the Bush-
man boys being so literal that they not only gave a precise
rendition of the event but took exactly the amount of time
that the hyenas had taken.

574 The adults had not watched the children but were visiting
quietly with each other, some of the men from the Okwa
band having come to Ukwane's werf to sit at the fires. Very
late at night, when the Firewood Star was rising and the
Zebra Stars of Orion were just setting foot upon the earth,
the visitors got up to go.



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Dancers

WHEN Bushmen dance their medicine dances, the medicine⁵³⁵ begins to work in the bodies of the medicine men. Medicine⁷⁵⁶ is warmed to potency as the exercise of dancing warms the shaman's body, and by the heat of the fire that the shaman dances around. The medicine purges evil and cures a sickness that is known to the Gikwe as "star sickness," a mysterious, magic sickness that has no tangible symptoms but together with evil is brought to people by the spirits of the dead. You can tell that powerful curing medicine is at work during one of these dances because the medicine men fall into trance, shudder and shriek and roll their eyes up into their heads, fall into the fire or wash their faces with flaming coals and are not burned, and when they rub their fire-warmed hands on you to cure you their hands are hot and dry and flutter like moths, and presently the star sickness leaves you, enters the bodies of the medicine men, and is shrieked into the air, hurled back to the spirits of the dead who brought it.

There are many types of medicine at work in the Kalahari,⁷⁵⁶ and every band among the Gikwe, Kung, or any Bushman⁸²⁵ nation possesses certain of these. Some bands, for instance,

- 756 have the giraffe, rain, and gemsbok medicine. Others might
 ● 825 have the ratel, fire, and gemsbok medicine. Ukwane's band
 had the sun, dove, and gemsbok medicine. Almost every band
 has the gemsbok medicine, for magically the gemsbok are
 very important animals, obvious from the black medicine
 markings on a gemsbok's face.

756 The medicine songs are songs without words and are given
 [533] to both Kung and Gikwe Bushmen by the great god who
 [716] sends his messengers, the spirits of the dead, to a sleeping
 [715] person. The spirits of the dead teach the person a medicine
 song in a dream, and when the person awakens he teaches
 the song to the other members of his band.

At dances, women sing the medicine songs, men dance and
 use the medicine to cure people, for almost all men are made
 medicine men when they are in their late teens, after they
 have been initiated into manhood, having shot their first
 buck. They are made medicine men by older medicine men,
 and although any Bushman man may become a medicine
 man, only certain of them find that they have strong healing
 power, and these are the ones who practice, who fall into
 trance at dances and chase evil from their people. Ukwane
 himself had been one of these. None of the people he cured
 ever died, he said, but as he grew old his powers seemed to
 leave him, so now he did not practice any more. In his band
 Gai became the strong healer.

756 Of course, a medicine dance is a great affair, for it usually
 535 takes place at night and lasts all night into the morning.
 Everyone in the band takes part, every young boy old enough
 to walk may dance, every young girl may sing with the
 women, and women themselves may dance if they feel in-
 clined. People talk, eat, and smoke between dances, or go off
 to bed to sleep for a while, so, all in all, dances are social af-

823 when he is, it is because he has brought evil, sickness, catas-
776 trophe, or death.

The old god still exists, the Bushmen know him, but his presence is diffusing; he, the old power of evil, is becoming faint, his entity obscure.

821 In the west live the *kwa kwa kwara* (knee knee nothing),
776 the people with no knees. These people have no knee joints,
823 but must stand up always. At night when the sun sets, the people with no knees catch it and kill it, for the sun is meat. They put it in a pot, and when it is cooked they tell their children to run off and play, and when the children are gone the people with no knees eat it. When the children come back, the people with no knees pick their teeth and give what they remove to the children, and then the people with no knees take the shoulder blade of the sun and throw it back into the east again, where a new sun grows and rises in the morning. If a tall man throws it you are aware of nothing, but if a short man throws it you can hear it whirring overhead. We knew a Kung Bushman man who, said he, had been to the west and had visited the people with no knees. He had been very interested to see them and very curious to know how they slept at night, for he did not imagine that they could lie down, so when darkness came he had watched and waited, and, just as he had suspected, when they had finished the sun they did not lie down but leaned against forks of the trees, where they rested, propped.

- 825 In the north is a great river, the Okovango, and Bantu peo-
776 ple live there. In the south live the gemsbok people, who are not ordinary gemsbok but beings in gemsbok form. It was these beings who taught the Bushmen how to make ostrich-eggshell beads, for when making a bead the gemsbok people use their long horns to bore the hole in the center. The gemsbok people often wear strings of beads around their necks.

Peoples of the Veld and Sky

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The gemsbok people look just like gemsbok. When Bushmen⁸²⁵ are hunting they must be very careful not to mistake these⁷⁷⁶ people for ordinary gemsbok, because if a hunter should shoot a gemsbok person even by accident he would get very sick and die. But such accidents are rare, for if a group of gemsbok people are out grazing and notice that a Bushman hunter is drawing his bow at them, they will say to him: "Do not shoot us, we are not gemsbok," and the hunter will naturally leave them alone.

Under the world is another world just like this one, with⁷⁷² trees and omarambas, hills and pans, a sun and a moon, Bushmen, Bantus, and Europeans just like the people here, and the bottom of our world is that world's sky. There is no other connection between our world and the lower world except possibly through certain deep waterholes, for it was through a waterhole that the great god climbed from that world when he first came here.

Over the world, of course, is the sky, and there is nothing⁸²¹ above that. The sun, which is not only meat but a death-giving agent because it burns the veld and dries up the waterholes, is a male, and the moon when it is full is female. A crescent moon, called *nui ma ze* (moon small new), is male, and so are the great destructive thunderheads that bring hailstorms or electric storms which break down dwellings and flatten the grass. The soft gray clouds that carry land rains which blow like mists into the plants of the veld and make them grow are female. The rain of male and female clouds is itself male or female, depending on the cloud's gender or on whether the rain is creative or destructive, but if you can't tell from the rain as it falls you can tell from its footprints, for male rain leaves sharp, pierced marks in the dust and female rain leaves wide, soft splashes. And as for the stars, they are called by some the eyes of dead people and by others are

778 sure, was dead. At last a visitor came from her son's band
821 who assured her that her son was safe and well, and she knew
then that the storm was not for his *now*, loose in the air, but
possibly for the *now* of someone else, though when she heard
the news it did not matter to her who might have died, for
she was happy.

The effect of *now* is simple when a person dies, or when a
person burns his hair or urinates to change the weather. With
childbearing for women and with killing the great antelope
for men (as the great antelope also have *now*, although the
[823] small ones do not) the *now* has a larger, more complex ef-
fect. In these cases the *now* of the hunter interacts with the
now of the antelope, the *now* of the woman interacts with the
now of the child newly born, and when the blood of the ante-
lope falls upon the ground as the antelope is killed, when the
fluid of the womb falls upon the ground at the child's birth,
the interaction of *nows* takes place, and this brings a change
in the weather. In this way a mother may bring rain or
drought when she bears a child, a hunter may bring rain or
drought when he kills an antelope, no matter what kind of
now the mother or the hunter may have. The mother or the
hunter can only watch the weather to see what has taken
place.

Now is intangible, mystic, and diffuse, and Bushmen them-
selves do not fully understand its workings. They do not know
how or why *now* changes weather but only that it does. They
watch the changes carefully, though, and by observing have
discovered the limits of their own *nows*. When the fluid
from a mother's womb falls upon the ground the child's *now*
is determined, and it is partly for this reason that birth is
such a mighty thing.

844- Birth is usually joyous. Bushmen of all ages adore their
children and grandchildren, placing a child's health and

222 the smoke had confused them and they did not sting, although they flew everywhere looking for us. The old man turned his back, hunched his head between his shoulders, and hid from them as one would hide if one were being pelted with stones. When the swarm had dispersed a little he finished the opening. The Bushmen say that when bees are disturbed they are vicious only at first. After a while they become disorganized and confused and they fly about but do not sting you. When you smoke bees you must be careful not to burn them or smoke them too much because they are

- [778] 825 magic creatures with medicine to control fire, and if you harm them they will cause fire to burn you. A young boy whom we knew once burned some bees, and that night, when he was asleep by the fire, the fire sought him out and burned the skin of his belly, touching him only and no one else.

Lazy Kwi and the old man did the work perfectly. They were not stung badly, the tree was open, and no bees were seriously harmed. Inside the tree we could see the brown combs hanging and the bees as thick as fur around them. Lazy Kwi took out the combs and put them in a wooden bowl, licking his fingers afterward, and before we went back we ate some of the honey. There were two kinds, old honey and new honey, and the new honey was pale yellow and very [262] sweet and mild, winter honey made from the small, dry flowers of the veld. The old honey was much sweeter and strong enough to burn your mouth. Before we left, the old man [155] and Lazy Kwi carefully wiped their hands and arms with grass, for they were covered with honey and things were beginning to stick to them. Then we went back to camp and in the afternoon we packed to go on toward Gautscha Pan.

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[222] Lazy Kwi packed a skin bag full of tsi nuts and the seeds of baobab fruit, alum-like powdery stones that ripen at the start of the dry season. The old man had a huge net bag filled

Toma the Leader

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the wind or passing feet had disarranged them; and the meat²²⁴
 that resulted from his prolific hunting was never wasted, for¹⁵⁹
 he would bring other hunters to help him dry it, then carry it¹⁵¹
 off to a werf somewhere to share with others.²⁵¹
^{476]}

He knew the habits of animals from the ways of the largest¹⁵⁹
 antelope all the way down to the smallest species of mice; in⁸²⁵
 fact, he must have known animals very well, for he could al-
 ways find them. He knew when he was in danger and when
 he was safe, and he was as brave as he was careful. Once, Short¹⁵⁹
 Kwi, John, and two other hunters were tracking a bull wilde²²⁴
 beast that one of the hunters had shot. They came upon it¹⁵⁷
 lying down, surrounded by a very large pride of lions. There
 were twenty or thirty lions in all, having got there first and
 claiming the wildebeest as their own, for the bushes were full
 of lions walking back and forth, watching several other lions
 brave the fallen wildebeest, still able to protect itself with its
 horns. The braver lions were standing near the wildebeest,
 obviously steeling themselves for the attack, when the hunters
 arrived. The Bushmen had followed the wildebeest's trail
 through thorns and over the parching desert and were not to
 be deprived, and, speaking softly to the lions, they said: "We
 know you are strong, Big Lions, we know you are brave, but
 this meat is ours and you must give it back to us."

Even after these words the lions did not give ground. Their
 round eyes watched the hunters and they began to growl, and
 the four men, quite unarmed except for their arrows and a
 spear (to use a spear would have been folly), said respect-
 fully: "Great Lions, Old Lions, this meat belongs to us," and
 then advanced on the lions, throwing little stones and clods
 of dirt. The lions in the bushes began to back away, while the
 braver lions stood their ground until a clod struck one of
 them, causing him to huff and run back a little. At this, the
 courage of the other lions broke and they all turned and

The Sun Dance

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veld began to show, the women sang the sun-dance fully, a⁵³⁵
song quite different from the others, very even, very simple,
steady, dignified, and grave. ⁵³³

The dawn wind lifted and blew away the smoke and dust and made the people shiver. The light showed the dancers moving stiffly, the singers hunched together for support and warmth, and revealed dusty, dirty faces and dirty teeth. Dust had made mud in the corners of our mouths and eyes.

Only about ten women were singing in the circle now, and they sat all together at one spot, leaving a lot of space around the fire; only four men danced and they moved slowly in their track, burdened by their rattles. They, too, stayed close together so that most of their huge track was bare.

When the sun was over the horizon the dance stopped. The women ended their song abruptly, stood up, shook the dust and straw from their clothing, and walked away. They did not speak to one another because they were tired. The men talked for a moment as they sat down, stretched, untied their rattles, before walking off two by two toward their werfs. Soon all that remained was the dance track, a deep circular rut in the ground, the big heap of dead white ashes, and the dusty bushes and trees.

The people who had been dancing during the night slept⁵¹³ all through the heat of the day and as the afternoon came, lying in the shade of trees and bushes. Flies buzzed over them, the afternoon shadows lengthened and the day cooled, and still they slept on.

When the light was red and the sun was almost setting,⁴⁸¹ the women began to stir, getting to their feet slowly, and then ⁸²⁵ alone or in twos and threes, followed by their children, walked down the path to the water, the last ones to leave

481 hurrying because one of the little boys had found a millipede
 ● 825 and was trotting behind them carrying it. Bushman women do not like millipedes; millipedes make them very nervous. Someone persuaded the child to drop it, which he did reluctantly. It was a giant, shiny black and a foot long, and it ran away with the front of its body in the air, its head bent like a curbed horse. The little boy watched it go.

515 The women walked through the acacia trees and reached the pan, the shining lake, red now with sunset, and even though the air was getting cool the children ran in the shallow water, splashing, the women crouched on the rocks to bathe. They took off their karosses and bathed their arms and legs and faces, washing all the dust away, then brushed their teeth with their fingers. Beautiful Ungka called for Little Dabe and hung her ornaments on him while she bathed. He ran through the water playing, splashing with the other children, quite unconscious of his gorgeous array. Beautiful Ungka was so supple that as she sat bathing she could lay her body down on the rocks between her raised knees, which she did to reach the water, saving herself the trouble of moving forward.

292 After they had bathed, the young girls made aloe circlets for their heads, red in the red light of the sky, and they seemed very innocent and beautiful, fresh and clean; they dressed themselves slowly as the sun went down, then walked into the water, where they danced, slowly, idly, kicking to make a rhythmic splash.

854 Little Dabe, on the shore now, found the rocks hard on his feet and began to wail, and all alone on top of the rocks, picking his feet up one after the other, he was like a peacock in his ornaments, with his complaining, raucous cry. Beautiful
 854
 415 ful Ungka carried him then, although she too was barefoot, bouncing him up and down while the other women rinsed and filled their ostrich eggshells.

The Medicine Bees

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had been robbing its hives of honey for years. Gao Feet said²²² that its hives were raided every few months or so and wondered if there would be any honey left for us. While pondering this question we stopped at the base of the tree and looked up, high above us, at a crack in its trunk where bees were flying, and in a moment, to my great surprise, the whole hive of them had poured down over our heads and were stinging us badly. We dropped everything that we carried and ran as fast as we could into the bushes, slapping wildly at ourselves, scattering in every direction, and each of us, as we reached thick bushes, hid in the branches, only to be routed out again by someone else pursued by bees, and in this way we were scattered further. Far from the hive though we were, the air around us was full of bees; they kept us hiding and cowering like jackals, peering out from under bushes, away from our water jars and ostrich eggs which we had dropped in our hurry, and they held us in this way for hours. We were tired²²² and wanted to go home, but we could not leave our water. I,⁸²⁵ at least, was astonished that such a thing should have happened, but to the Bushmen it was no surprise. The bees, those magic, medicine creatures, were having their revenge. As a group, we were responsible for having killed the bees of another hive. The Bushmen were only surprised at themselves for not having foreseen the disaster.

In the middle of the afternoon my brother borrowed every²²² body's clothing and, swathing himself in it while the lenders²⁷¹ crouched naked in the bushes, braved the swarm and retrieved our water. Then we went back toward Gautscha, pausing on the way to dig a water root which Lazy Kwi had known was there. The root was quite large, very wet, and though it was as puckery as alum it did quench thirst.

Late afternoon had come now, and I was so tired that I sat⁰⁰⁰ down to lean against a bush, where I almost fell asleep. Toma

224 than to be squatting around the
edges of the pans, making little guises
with sticks and string into which
guinea fowl invariably fall.

224 The technology of hunting is the
278 most complex in !Kung culture, and
the most involved aspect of that
technology is their amazing poison.
Without it, the little unfeathered ar-
rows, driven by a light bow, would
be useless against big game. With
the poison, a !Kung hunter could
kill an elephant although, perhaps
fortunately, for both, the two seldom
encounter one another.

224 THERE are four kinds of poison—a
278 root (which is rarely used), two
825 grubs and the pod of a tree. One of
the two kinds of grub is the larva
of an unidentified beetle that lives in
a bush; the other is the larva of a
beetle that lives in certain Murula
trees, identified as *Diaphidia sim-*

224 plex. This identity, however, is com-
279 plicated by the presence of still a
825 third beetle, a parasitic one that ap-
parently lives on the grubs of *Diam-*
phidia simplex, so that it is not now
clear which is the poisonous grub. The
Bushmen are aware of the parasite
and feel that its grub does contain
poison. They say it "runs around
and runs away." They may be speak-
ing of the beetle, for it is difficult to
imagine a grub running, and the grub
may be so similar to the young *Diam-*
phidia that the !Kung simply confuse
the two. Lastly, still a fourth insect—
smaller, and hairy—said to become
easily inflamed, is occasionally en-
countered among the grubs. It is
possible that this is the insect that
has a poisonous larva: in any case,
somewhere in the community is a
poisonous grub, and how the Bush-
men found it we have no idea.
Assuming *Diamphidia* to be the

[P.52]

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BAGS FOR FOOD, above, like eggshells
for water, give !Kung some freedom in

moving. Food may be brought to water
or water carried far into the desert.

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poison-bearer, its cycle is somewhat as follows: the beetle lays its eggs in the Marula tree leaves. Hatching in the rains, the grubs migrate down the trunk, progressing through a number of growth stages. Finally, they make their cocoons under the ground near the tree. In these cocoons, they struggle through metamorphosis and emerge as small, bravely-colored beetles in the New Year's rains, providing the Bushmen have not already dug them up. The hunters know the particular trees frequented by the beetles and make expeditions to them at least twice a year to replenish their supply. Then the grubs are dug up, and used on the spot or kept in their cocoons, depending on the man's needs.

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The poisoning of !Kung arrows is a long process, with a number of variations. The most common poison is a mixture of the grub and the previously mentioned tree-pod. The grubs are crushed and the pod is warmed until its contents melt slightly and can be crushed with the grubs. This mixture is thinned with the copious spit which results from chewing any of a variety of barks and is then smeared on the foreshaft of the arrow—but cleaned immaculately off

[p. 53]

821) them or seek to gain beneficent influence from them. As far as we know they do not pray to them for food as the Cape Bushmen are said once to have done, or for rain as the Naron and Auen and /O /Kung do.'

The /Kung beliefs about rain, which I do not describe in detail in this paper, include the idea that rain is life-giving and makes the food plants and other vegetation grow, whereas the sun is death-giving. The /Kung do not now formally personify or deify rain or worship it, but may retain a vestige of an ancient personification of rain in praying to it, in a manner of speaking, as they also do to lightning. 'Fall silently, rain. Do not make such a noise. Do not be dangerous', they say. Or, to lightning, 'Do not come against me. Go to the other side.'

- 825 The /Kung do not attribute divinity to the mantis but, in calling it 'the servant of *Ganwa*', perhaps they preserve a vestige or an echo of the Cape Bushman belief in *kaggen*. If they injure a mantis which is walking on them or throw one into the fire,
- [753] 'Ganwa would see this and say that his servant was being ill treated and would punish the person. He would make the person sick'. Mantises are *chi dole* (*chi*, thing; *dole*, bad) not because they harm you—they only prick and tickle you—but because they belong to *Ganwa* and people are afraid of the 'owner'. The old people told them these things. We saw the /Kung hold mantises, however, without exhibiting fear or the uncanny fascinated feeling I had when I watched them (especially the huge female who lived with me, with her consort seemingly permanently attached to her, and fascinated me by never seeming to take her eyes off me as she made her slow and stately progress around the tent at night).

The /Kung react in quite a different way to millepedes. They say there are two kinds. The large one they call *ko ko chi nabe*; the small one they call *choba* or *zoba*. One day a boy picked up a millepede and threw it toward a group of women. They jumped up and fled, shrieking. Talking about it afterwards, they explained that 'even men are afraid of millepedes'. (We observed several incidents of people jumping and running from them.) They are very dangerous, the /Kung say. If one gets on you, the shock of fright you feel could kill you. 'Millepedes work with *Ganwa*. He sends them to eat your nose when you are asleep.' If you put a *choba* in the fire when the *u/i* berries (*Grewia flava* D.C.) are still green, the berries will not ripen properly and will not be sweet. If the /Kung find the ash of a millepede which has been burned in a veld fire and has kept its shape, they take the ash for a medicine. (Cf. Schapera's account that among the Naron and Auen 'the millipede, said to belong to *Hithe*, is only touched by them [magicians]; they dry it and use it powdered as medicine.'²)

774 The /Kung do not believe that animals have spirits or souls or that earthly objects
825 (such as trees or water, for example) are entered by spirits or are themselves animated by having spirits of their own.

787 Divination is a secular practice among the /Kung. The oracle disks may be thrown and read by any man. They are five leather disks about two-and-a-half to three inches in diameter. The man who throws them gathers them into his cupped hands, flings them with a spreading motion on to a kaross on the ground, and reads what they reveal or predict. Different personifications are attributed to the disks, according to what the people want to learn from them. If advice about a hunt is wanted, the

¹ Schapera, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

775 and they have a respectful term, */airisi*, to use if they wish to show deference and be ingratiating. Actually the /Kung seemed to speak of the *//ganwasi* quite often and much less reluctantly than they spoke of the gods. I did not happen to hear them use */airisi* except when they were telling me the term.

775 The *//ganwasi* move about in the sky or on earth. All over the sky fine cords are stretched, like the strands of a spider's web, invisible to us but strong. The *//ganwasi* move on these cords and can go anywhere. They descend to earth on one which hangs down from the sky, the one by which the medicine men climb up when they go to see *//Gawwa* in the western sky.

775 The idea that the stars are the eyes of the dead, which some Bushmen believe, is not held by the Nyae Nyae /Kung. Some informants had heard that other people believed this. Laxy /Qui said he did not know; certainly enough people had died to account for there being so many stars. Others said stars are just stars there in the sky. Although they have names for several of them and stories about some, they do not know what substances stars are made of or what their nature is.

775 The /Kung associate falling stars with death. They do not believe that they are spirits of the dead but that they fall to earth and become insects which are colloquially called 'ant lions' (*Myrmaleonidae*, in the order of Neuroptera). These insects are common in the region. In the larval state they live in holes in the ground where one can see them spurring out grains of earth or sand. They devour ants. The /Kung believe that the bite of a fallen star may cause you to die the next day but that, if the star likes you and wishes to spare you, its bite will do you no harm. The old people have said so. *≠Gao/na* has no particular association with ant lions other than being the creator and controller of all things.

The spirits of dead persons are transmuted into *//ganwasi* by *≠Gao/na* in the east. When a person dies, *//ganwasi* come soon to take his spirit. The children of the gods are sometimes the ones who come, we were told, but any of the *//ganwasi* may do so, either ancestors of the dead person or non-related spirits.

[774] The *//ganwasi* pull the spirit out through the head of the corpse. The head is, likewise, the egress of the spirits of the medicine men. When the medicine men are in trance, [787] which the /Kung call half-death, their spirits go out temporarily from their bodies through their heads to encounter and combat *//Gawwa* and the *//ganwasi*, who lurk in the shadows around the dance fire, and it is through the heads that the spirits return.

[775] The spirit which the *//ganwasi* take from the corpse is distinct from life. The /Kung believe that life, *≠tsa*, is inside the body of a person or animal, that it is put there and held there by the creator. It exists in all the vital organs in the abdomen, in blood, in the heart, lungs, throat, and mouth, and is everywhere in the head. It does not exist in the arms and legs, the /Kung believe, because they know that human beings and animals can be wounded in a limb or even lose one and not die, whereas a wound in the vital parts is likely to kill. Life dies in the body and stays there—dead, as the [774] body itself is there but dead. It is the spirit which does not die. The only word I know for spirit is *//ganwa*. The spirit is like air. It cannot be seen and cannot be kept by mortals. The *//ganwasi* take it and they take the heart and blood of the person as well. These the *//ganwasi* carry first into the western sky, to the place where *//Gawwa* lives, but they do not leave them with him. They carry them further, around by the south to the east, to the place where *≠Gao/na*, the great creator, lives.

/KUNG BUSHMAN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

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The great creator receives the spirit, heart, and blood of the dead person and turns these elements into a *//ganwa*. To do this he makes a fire under the tree which grows in his werf, the tree for which we know no name. He puts a pot on the fire, and in this he boils medicines. Only he has these particular medicines. Men do not know their names. $\neq$ Gao/na then hangs the spirit, heart, and blood of the dead person in the tree. The tree itself is medicine. That is why the people fear it and why $\neq$ Gao/na hangs the spirits in it. The medicine smoke rises and blows around the dead person's spirit, heart, and blood, and they are transmuted into a *//ganwa*. $\neq$ Gao/na then smears the *//ganwa* with fat. This fat is not from an animal; it belongs only to $\neq$ Gao/na and is called /thoo. $\neq$ Gao/na then takes the *//ganwa* to live with him in his house. 775
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The *//ganwasi* have bodies which resemble those they had on earth except for their hair. We were told that their hair is changed from the Bushman's spirals to $\neq$ Gao/na's hair, which is long, like a European's, but as black as a Bushman's. Only medicine men who have full medicine see the *//ganwasi*. 775
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The *//ganwasi* eat food. As I understand it, they, like $\neq$ Gao/na and *//Ganwa*, eat the same foods that mortals eat, meat and veldkos, but they have their own supplies. They also are very fond of honey. They are said on occasion also to steal the veldkos of human beings from the places where they grow, and they sometimes change themselves into birds—not vultures, but smaller birds called /gawra—and in this form come into the werf and eat the people's meat right where it hangs in the branches beside the scherms. The *//ganwasi* have their own implements, weapons, karosses, &c. They want nothing from men and there is no point in offering them things. [825] ●

$\neq$ Gao/na gives the *//ganwasi* everlasting life. They grow older but, before they are very old, he rejuvenates them. He has a medicine for this which he does not give to men. Children who die remain children. [782]

//Ganwasi keep their own spouses if they wish, and they live together but do not beget children. No great point was made of this. It was interesting to learn that, if a *//ganwa* tires of his wife and wants another, he may kill a living woman who attracts him, so, if a beautiful woman dies, one who is fresh and clean and wears fine ornaments, one could suspect that some *//ganwa* has taken her for himself. And a strong young hunter might be killed by a female *//ganwa* who wanted him. In spite of the power and dominance of the gods, the *//ganwasi* take things into their own hands sometimes. [761]

No distinction is made between a good and a bad person when he dies. All go to the great god in the east and all become *//ganwasi* without differentiation in status or function. With the exception of suicide, no distinction is made either between a good and a bad death, such as is reported by Fourie of the Aven, according to Schapera: "People who die a "good death" are said to go to /khutse, those dying a "bad death" to Gama. The former have a good time and live in plenty; the latter, on the other hand, often suffer hunger and distress." Among the Nyae Nyae /Kung suicides are said to stay with *//Ganwa* in the west. Burial also has no effect upon the status in the after-life—whether a person is buried properly bound in a deep round grave, or scratched into a shallow trench, or not buried at all and eaten by beasts. [762]

The beliefs which we associate with ghosts—the haunting of graves or certain other places, appearing as spectres to persons, &c.—are not highly developed among the /Kung but are not entirely lacking. Three stories of *//ganwasi* haunting graves came

¹ Schapera, op. cit., p. 168.

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136 of animals named and known by the Dobe area Bushmen. Of
126 these 420 species, 350 species were collected and identified

433 by the author. Two-thirds of the plant species and half of

824 the animal species are utilized by the Bushmen. Of these,

- 825 they classify 85 species of plants and 54 species of animals as edible. It is therefore evident that the Bushmen have a remarkably broad subsistence base. On closer examination, however, one finds that the Bushmen are highly selective in their food habits. In fact, only nine species of plants constituted about three-quarters of the total vegetable diet; and one species alone, the mongongo nut, accounted for at least half of the total. Furthermore, of the 54 animal species eaten, only 17 species were consistently hunted.

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262 A plant species may be regarded by the Bushmen as a major food for one or more of several reasons. Certain foods are prized because of their abundance or because of the long season during which they are available. Other foods are prized because of the ease with which they are collected. For this reason fruits are generally more popular than roots since the latter have to be dug out of the ground. Then there are foods which are especially good tasting and/or believed to be highly nutritious. The various plant foods are evaluated pragmatically and rationally and few species
825 are restricted by magico-religious taboos. This is in sharp
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262 contrast to the evaluation of animal foods all of which fall under taboos of varying strictness.

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262 By using these criteria of abundance, duration of eating season, ease of exploitation, tastiness and nutritional value, the Bushmen have arranged the universe of edible plants hierarchically in terms of the overall desirability of each species as food.

This scheme divides the 85 edible species into six classes:

I. Primary	1 species
II. Major	8 spp.
III. Minor	14 spp.
IV. Supplementary	32 spp.
V. Rare	13 spp.
VI. Problematic	<u>17 spp.</u>
TOTAL	85 species

I. Primary food - All Bushmen of the Dobe area agree that their primary food is the nut of the mongongo (*mangetti*) tree: *Ricinodendron rautanenii*. This food rates high on all the criteria of desirability described above. It is superabundant (millions of nuts rot on the ground each year for want of eating); it is eaten in all months of the year; it is easy to collect, has a delicious taste, and is highly

222 dimension in which the gatherers move farther and farther in
262 order to eat the desirable foods, and a hierarchical dimension
in which people remain in one area and eat their way through
classes of species of decreasing desirability.

136 Animal Resources

The 223 known species of animals in the Dobe area are
divided taxonomically as follows:

mammals	42 spp.
birds	75 spp.
reptiles and amphibians	24 spp.
<u>invertebrates</u>	<u>82 spp.</u>
TOTAL	223 spp.

262 Mammals - The mammals represent the highest percentage of
825 animal biomass in the Dobe area and it is not surprising that
the meat of mammals accounts for over 90% of the animal diet
of the Bushmen. In all, 29 of the 42 mammal species are known
to be eaten by the Bushmen and only seven mammal species are
universally tabooed as food.

Personal, age specific, and sex specific taboos play
an important role in the eating of mammals. No individual
Bushman will eat all of the 29 eaten species and no two
individuals have the same set of tabooed species. Each person
has his own prescription of what species he may and may not
eat. The mammals can be divided into seven degrees of taboos.

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First, there are nine species which are eaten by all people regardless of sex and age, although there are restrictions on the anatomical parts. For instance, women may not eat kudu intestines, but may eat the meat of the extremities. This class of animals includes:

giraffe	hartebeeste
eland	kudu
roan antelope	duiker
gemabok	hare
wildebeeste	

A second group of species may be eaten by all except premenstrual adolescent girls. The mammals include:

steenbok	springhare
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Third are the species that are eaten by most people. Individuals may not eat one or another of these species because of personal dietary restrictions set by the ritual curers:

wart hog	porcupine
buffalo	bat-eared fox
antbear	pangolin

Fourth are species that are eaten by a few people of both sexes and are avoided by most people:

genet	slender mongoose
honey badger	banded mongoose
aardwolf	cheetah

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Fifth are species that are eaten only by old women for whom the food taboos of adult life have been lifted:

lion	caracul
leopard	zebra
jackal	

Sixth is a species that is eaten only by ritual curers for magical purposes:

cape polecat (zorilla)

Finally there are seven species that are universally tabooed. These include the carnivorous species that are said to eat people:

spotted hyena	brown hyena
wild dog	wild cat

as well as three species of primates that the Bushmen say are close relatives of man:

vervet monkey	baboon
galago	

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The small mammals, such as rodents, bats, and squirrels, are not hunted or eaten. The Bushmen said that no taboos were associated with these species. However, these species were not worth killing because each carried only a few ounces of meat. Occasionally squirrels that are found dead or accidentally caught in snares are fed to the dogs.

The important point in terms of food resources is that

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all hunters may hunt every species regardless of whether a given species is personally tabooed.

In actual practice only ten species of mammal were consistently hunted by the Dobe area Bushmen. These are: kudu, wildebeeste, gemsbok, steenbok, duiker, wart hog, antbear, porcupine, springhare, and common hare.

In addition to the above a further ten species were observed to be occasionally killed and eaten. These include:

pangolin	bat-eared fox
genet	honey badger
aardwolf	cheetah
slender mongoose	jackal
caracul	cape polecat

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The Bushmen generally consider the meat of herbivorous mammals as the most desirable food. The meat of insectivorous mammals such as antbear, pangolin and bat-eared fox is less highly prized. The meat of carnivores is generally undesirable but nevertheless eaten by at least some people, when it is available. At the bottom of the list of preferences is the meat of hyena and wild dog. The Bushman explanation is that since these species eat people, to eat their meat is indirectly an act of cannibalism.

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There is evidence of regional and historical variation in the species systematically hunted by the !Kung of the

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224 central interior. John Marshall found that most of the meat brought in by the Nyae Nyae area hunters was from the large ungulates such as wildebeeste, eland and gemsbok. Small mammals such as springhare were rarely hunted (1957, and personal communication). By contrast, the most frequent kills in the Dobe area were the smaller animals: springhare, steenbok and duiker, whereas the killing of a large antelope was a rare and great event. Giraffe and eland were not hunted by the men of the Dobe area.

[73] The older Bushmen state that in the early days there were more game animals and more Bushmen in the central interior and that their forefathers used to hunt in large groups, killing giraffe, buffalo and even elephant.

At present, the most important single source of meat in the Bushman diet is wart hog. It was not the most frequent mammal killed. Springhare, steenbok and duiker were all killed more frequently than wart hog. But the southern African wart hog weighs about 170 lbs., whereas the springhare weighs only 7-1/2 lbs, the steenbok, 25 lbs., and the duiker 43 lbs. At the Dobe camp wart hog were killed at the rate of three per month throughout the study period. The edible portion of each carcass is about 50%. Therefore wart hog provided a regular supply of c. 255 lbs. of meat per month to the members of the Dobe camp.

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224 Steenbok and duiker were the next in importance because of the frequency with which they were killed, especially during the winter when they were systematically trapped and during late spring when the young could be easily run down on foot.

Springhare were the most frequent animal killed. The 7-1/2 lb. carcass has a high percentage of edible meat (60%) and the killing rate in some seasons was as high as 10 per week.

It is difficult to evaluate the large antelopes, kudu, wildebeeste, and gemsbok in terms of their dietary importance because they were rarely killed. A hunter who had killed five large antelopes in a year was considered to be above average. Most of the hunters killed one or two per year. Even a single kill, however, provides a massive return in meat. The average dead weights¹ of these species are:

kudu (M)	600 lbs.
kudu (F)	350 lbs.
gemsbok (M)	444 lbs.
gemsbok (F)	514 lbs.
wildebeeste (M)	550 lbs.
wildebeeste (F)	450 lbs.

¹All the mammal weights quoted in this study were provided by Reay Smithers (personal communications).

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By killing one male kudu (600 lbs.) with a weight 24 times greater than that of a steenbok (25 lbs.) a hunter would provide his camp with a quantity of meat roughly equivalent to that provided by 20 steenbok (assuming that the kudu has a somewhat lower ratio of edible to inedible parts than does a steenbok).

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On the face of it, hunting large antelope would appear to have overwhelming advantages in terms of meat. However, when news of such a kill reaches neighboring camps, dozens of friends and relatives descend upon the killer's camp to assist him in disposing of the meat. Thus at the end of several jovial days the superabundance of meat disappears and the fortunate hunter is out looking for meat again. The killing of a large antelope therefore has more prestige value than nutritional value to the family of the man who killed it.

This pattern of sharing large kills beyond the boundaries of a camp is ecologically adaptive because meat spoils quickly, especially during the rainy season and it is often necessary to eat meat that is in danger of becoming rotten.

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The Bushmen know how to make biltong (dried strips of meat) but rarely do this. This infrequency of making biltong is probably both a cause and an effect of sharing meat widely.

The only part of a large antelope kill that is consistently set aside for future consumption is the hide. This part of

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262 the animal evidently has much better storage properties than
224 the flesh.
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In general, the larger the animal killed, the more widely its meat is shared. The meat of springhare, hare, steenbok, and duiker is usually consumed by the hunter's immediate family. The meat of wart hog, antbear and porcupine is [228] shared out among the members of a hunter's camp. The meat of kudu, wildebeeste and gemsbok is shared out among the hunter's camp and among members of neighboring camps.

825 Birds - The eating of birds again illustrates the selective
262 food tastes of the Bushmen. Of the 75 species of birds
223 recorded only eight species were said to be eaten and of these only four species were observed to be systematically hunted. The four important game birds were:

crowned quinea fowl	red-billed francolin
Swainson's francolin	red-crested korhaan

The other birds eaten were:

Kori bustard	double-banded sandgrouse
Cape turtledove	red-billed teal

Snares were regularly set in order to capture quinea fowl, francolin and korhaan. Occasionally other birds triggered the snares. Usually these other species were fed to the dogs. Occasionally they were simply discarded.

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262 Only the eggs of the above eight species appeared to be
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gathered and eaten. With one exception all other birds eggs were ignored. The exception was the ostrich eggs which were highly prized as water containers and as material for making ostrich egg shell beads.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Only four species of reptile - two tortoises, one leguaan, and the rock python - were regarded by the Bushmen as edible. One species of frog, Pixiecephalus sp. was regarded as edible. Of these five species, the large leopard tortoise (Geochelone pardalis) is the most important food. These tortoises weigh 5-8 pounds. They are sluggish and easily collected. For this reason, the tortoises were the only species of vertebrate that were collected by the women. All other vertebrates were the exclusive concern of the men.

The rock python, a large non-poisonous snake, was regularly collected by the men. This provided c. 25 lbs. of meat per specimen. The pythons collected varied in length from 8-15 feet. The other three species were rarely observed to be eaten.

Invertebrates

Insects have traditionally been considered by ethnographers to be a major Bushman food (Bodenheimer 1951:137-195). However, among the Bushmen of the Dobe area insects played a minor role in the diet. One species of antlion and three

16: Lee E-5 (1963-1965) 1966 FX10 Bushmen FX10
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222 species of beetles were observed to be eaten. Termites and
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• [825] locusts were not eaten. Honey is highly regarded as food by
the Bushmen, and the hunters often investigated bees nests
but honey was never observed to be eaten at the Dobe camp
and only rarely at other camps.

262 In summary the plant and animal resources of the Dobe
824 area include 85 plant and 54 animal species which are eaten.
825 Closer examination reveals that only a small number of these
edible species play a major role in the diet. Only 26 of
the 139 edible species may be considered as major Bushman
foods: 9 species of plants and 17 species of animals.

DAILY LIFE AND FOOD

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exchanged from hut to hut, the women going to one hut, the men to another, and so on. Only the owners sit in a hut, while the visitors gather round the fire outside. The little children play about everywhere, the bigger boys and girls by themselves. There is no fixed time for going to sleep. As a rule the people turn in to bed fairly early, but if it is a fine evening dancing may be started and kept up till late, everybody taking part except the old people and the little children.¹

Food and Fire

The Bushmen will eat almost anything that can be eaten. Of animal foods the favourite is game of all kinds, when it can be obtained, and they are also very fond of hare, spring hare, guinea fowl, korhaan, partridge, ostrich, and other birds, as well as birds' eggs. Fish too are eaten wherever they can be caught, and among the Bushmen of the Okavango swamps are a staple article of diet. Anteaters, ant bears, tortoises, porcupines, bull frogs, snakes, and lizards are greatly relished, while among insects locusts, scorpions, beetles, young bees and honey, termites, flying ants and ants' eggs are also eaten. In fact all kinds of living animals are made use of as food, with the almost universal exception of the baboon and the hyena—the former "on account of its being so like a man", the latter "because it eats human corpses".

The most important vegetable foods in the Southern and Central Kalahari are the *tsama* (*Citrullus vulgaris*), "uintjies" (*Cyperus edulis* Dir.), *Grewia* berries, and the //noun (*Bauhinia esculenta*); in the Namib the *Inaras* fruit (*Acanthosicyos horrida* Welw.) forms almost the sole article of diet when in season; while as one proceeds northwards various fruit-bearing trees appear, such as the wild fig, palm, omungete nut, wild orange, omuande, and omuve. In addition numerous other varieties of edible roots, berries, cucumbers, tubers, melons, and ground nuts appear in great profusion during and after the rainy season, when they form the principal part of the daily menu.²

Much of the food is eaten raw, but the Bushmen know how to prepare and cook it. Each family prepares its own food. Cooking

¹ Passarge, op. cit., 44 sqq.; D. F. Bleek, *The Naron*, 32; Fourie, "The Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 88.

² Stow, *Native Races of S. Africa*, 14 sqq.; von François, *Nama und Damara*, 234-5; Schultze, *Aus Namaland und Kalahari*, 659 sqq.; Passarge, op. cit., 44 sqq.; Kaufmann, "Die Auin," 139-40, 144 sqq.; Werner, "Ueber die Heikum- und Kungbuschleute," 213-5; Dornan, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 114 sqq.; D. F. Bleek, op. cit., 6-7; Fourie, op. cit., 98 sq.

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lighting a new fire at the next encampment, although this is a practice which, as we have just seen, Fourie explicitly denies for the Heikum. ³⁷²
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There is no indication at all in the available literature that similar usages relating to fire are found among the rest of the Bushmen, nor is there any further evidence of their occurrence among the tribes mentioned above. On the other hand the sacred fire also plays a very conspicuous part in the social and ritual life of the OvaHerero, OvaMbo, and Bergdama, all of them close neighbours of the Bushmen tribes among whom it is found, and with the last two of whom the Heikum at least have intermixed considerably. It is probable therefore that the special observances relating to fire among the Heikum and the Kung may represent borrowed elements of culture; but much fuller information is needed about them before this can be definitely asserted. Whatever their origin, however, these usages now obviously play an important part in the social life of the people. In particular the fact that at the present time the chief of the band has certain exclusive functions in connection with fire is of outstanding significance in the whole sphere of public life, and one which cannot be dismissed merely because it may be due to the effects of contact with other peoples. To this point we shall have to return when discussing the political institutions of the Bushmen. ¹⁷¹
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Special Usages relating to Food

There is not much information available about food taboos, but it appears that, in some of the tribes at least, certain foods are forbidden to persons at different stages of life. In the texts obtained by Dr. Bleek and Miss Lloyd from the Cape Bushmen there are preserved the details of some of the food taboos prevalent among this people. Thus little children were not allowed to eat the heart of the jackal (on account of this animal's great timidity), certain portions of the ostrich, or the tip of the springbok's tail; a menstruating girl might not eat game killed by the young men, lest she bring them ill luck—she had to eat only game taken by her father; a certain kind of tortoise was forbidden to young unmarried men and women, for fear of arousing the wrath of the rain; women were not allowed to eat the flesh of the lynx; the tail of the porcupine was forbidden to certain (unspecified) persons; while all refrained from eating a certain small portion of the flesh of the hare.¹ The published information relating ²⁶²
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¹ L. C. Lloyd, *Further Bushman Material Collected*, 23; Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, cf. references in Index, s.v. "Food—not to be eaten."

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[114] to these taboos is unfortunately so fragmentary that little can be gathered of the ideas underlying them. Several of them are undoubtedly connected with wider ritual observances, e.g. the taboo [821] imposed on menstruating girls, and again that associated with a [821] certain belief about the rain; but of the others no full explanation is available, although the taboo on the portion of the hare may possibly [773] be linked up with the Bushman myth of the origin of death, in which [761] the hare plays the part of the fateful messenger who distorts the [825] promise of immortality sent to mankind by the moon.

Among the Naron, again, "It does not seem," says Miss Bleek,¹ "as if many taboos in the food line still existed. Paauw meat and ostrich eggs are chiefly given to old men as the greatest delicacies. Some say young children, or girls till they have had their first baby, are not to eat steenbok, lest they remain small, but others tell me that all meat is eaten by everyone. Honey touched by a baboon must not be eaten, or you will die." Among the Auen, young girls and boys apparently may not eat game at all, otherwise they will remain thin; while water and food collected by a menstruating woman may be partaken of only [841] by herself and old people—it "makes others weak".²

224 About the Heikum we have far more information on this point, [114] thanks to the excellent description given by Fourie of certain of their hunting observances.³ The details he gives throw such a wealth of new light upon this aspect of Bushman life that they may be quoted in full. "After an animal has been shot it is followed by the hunter until it expires or until nightfall when he returns to the //gaus (camp). The following morning the whole community takes part in the search for the carcass, as the previous day's tracks had in all probability been effaced during the night by other animals. 224 The searchers spread out on a wide front and keep a very sharp lookout 252 for the presence of vultures. After the carcass has been found it is [462] skinned by the men. The belly is then opened and the entrails removed and cleaned. Bags are made from the stomach and into these the blood is collected. The animal is next cut up and, after this has been done, the liver is roasted and eaten by the men. The skin, if suitable for the [281] purpose, is cut into sandals, bowstrings, etc., on the spot. The meat is then removed to the //gaus by the men who may occasionally be [462] assisted by the women. On arrival at the //gaus all the meat is laid

¹ *The Naron*, 7.³ Kaufmann, "Die Auen," 140, 157.² "The Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 100-2; cf. *idem*, "Customs of the Hei-//om Bushmen," 34-6.

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again; being, on the first occasion, allowed to look afar over her mother's hand. She leaves the small hut, when allowed to look about and around again; and she then walks about like the other women. During the time she is in retreat, she must not look at the springbok, lest they become wild."¹ She was not allowed to eat game killed by the young men, but only that which her father had shot; and, above all, she was not to look upon or be approached by men lest harm come to both them and herself. There are several legends describing how men who were looked upon by a girl at this time became fixed in whatever position they then occupied, or even became transformed into stones, or stars in the sky, or trees which talked; while girls who were disobedient became converted into frogs or were carried off to death by the rain.² [825] [773]

Further north, in some of the North-Western tribes (Naron, Auen, Kung), the central feature of the girls' puberty ceremony is the eland bull dance, which is held in the girl's honour.³ As soon as she has her first period, neighbours and friends assemble to a big feast given by her parents. By day she is kept in a special hut, tended by women only, and no man may come near her; while every night until her period has passed the eland bull dance is performed. All the men and boys leave the camp, save two old men, who tie elands' horns or wooden imitations thereof to their heads, and wait in the bushes. The older women stand in a line, singing and clapping their hands. The girl is brought from her hut, and sits or lies on the ground by them. The younger women then circle round before them, or make a figure of eight. They dance with their arms outstretched before them, and have a peculiar slow, swaying step. As they dance they lift their karosses and aprons to one side, and expose their buttocks, which they waggle from side to side. Then the two "bulls" stamp up, holding their karosses pulled well down over their shoulders, and presenting a hunched-up appearance. They join the line of dancers, sometimes leading it, sometimes in the middle of it, and dance with a slow, jogging step. The song accompanying their movements is full and low in tune, but without words. The motif of this dance clearly is the courtship of the eland bull, and although as seen by Passarge and Miss Bleek it was kept within bounds, they say that it can easily become indecent. [831]

¹ Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 76-7.

² Bleek, *Bushman Texts*, 10, 14, 18; Lloyd, *Further Bushman Material Collected*, 10.

³ Passarge, *Die Buschmänner*, 101-3; Kaufmann, "Die Auln," 197-8; D. F. Bleek, *The Naron*, 23.

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out by the hunter, who, however, keeps the skin, sinews, etc., for 224 himself.

The Cape Bushmen occasionally dressed themselves up in the 223 skin of an animal or in the feathers of an ostrich in order to approach 825 the game unsuspected. A kind of saddle made of grass in which were stuck ostrich feathers was placed on the shoulders, while a long stick [292] with the head curved to look like an ostrich was carried in the hand. The hunter by imitating the motions of the bird feeding, running or preening its feathers contrived to get as close to the flock as possible, always moving up wind, before discharging his poisoned arrow. In a well-known rock painting from Herschel reproduced by Stow [532] there is portrayed such a scene, in which the hunter is shown under the feathers of an ostrich, cautiously approaching, with poised arrow, a number of real ostriches who are feeding peacefully close by. Similar disguises are employed by the Namib Bushmen, but appear to be [184] generally unknown among the tribes further north, although the ostrich disguise is reported by Dornan of the Hiechware and on hearsay by Kaufmann of the Auen. Various other ruses are known, however. Some men are very clever at imitating the calls of various birds and animals and by this means get quite close and thus secure their quarry. Again, "in the season when the young animals are not able to follow 224 their dams, they are hidden by the mothers, who feed in the vicinity. 825 The Bushmen having found where a young one is hidden, will go close up to it and imitate its cry. The mother, hearing the cry and thinking that some wild animal has attacked her calf, immediately rushes up to protect it, and is easily killed. Numbers of animals, more especially the smaller buck, are destroyed in this manner." *

Almost every Bushman village has also a large number of dogs 224 which accompany their masters on the hunt. * These are the only [231] domestic animals possessed by the Bushmen. They are lean, hungry-looking mongrels, half-starved and savage-tempered. They are quite silent on the spoor and never betray the presence of the hunters by barking, though they will snarl and sometimes bark if one approaches an encampment. "It is really wonderful," says Herbst, "with what courage these lean mongrels will tackle a leopard, a courage no doubt begotten of hunger and an absolute confidence in their masters, who, with their knobkerries, are never far behind so

* Stow, op. cit., pl. vii, facing p. 82.

* Dornan, op. cit., 101; cf. Kaufmann, op. cit., 146.

* Lichtenstein, *Travels in S. Africa*, ii, 262-3; Barrow, *Travels in S. Africa*, i, 371; Herbst, *Report on Rietfontein Area*, 6; Range, *Beiträge zur Landeskunde des Namalandes*, 73; Schultze, op. cit., 667; Dornan, op. cit., 103-4; D. F. Bleek, op. cit., 16.

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226 more important as a mode of subsistence than hunting.¹ It² is also
 [462] the work of the men. Among the Cape Bushmen, especially those
 [227] living along the banks of the Orange River, the principal method
 employed lay in the use of funnel-shaped traps of closely woven reeds,
 about 3 feet long and 18 inches to 2 feet wide, narrowing towards the
 mouth. These traps were stretched across the stream in a shallow
 part, and while some men stood waiting behind them, others waded
 up stream from a point below and drove the fish before them to the
 reed traps, where they were then caught and thrown on shore.

In the Okavango basin this method is also used, but there is a variety
 of others as well. Sometimes the fish in the lakes and rivers are speared
 [177] from flat-bottomed boats, probably adopted from the MaMbukushu
 [501] and MaKoba of the same region. Sometimes, again, small stone dams
 are built from each bank so as to run out into the river in a slanting
 direction, leaving a narrow opening in which is placed the reed trap.
 The fish are either swept into these traps by the force of the current,
 or are driven in by the Bushmen themselves. Or, again, reed fences
 or stone dams are built straight across the beds of the dry courses
 into which the river overflows at times of flood. When the flood has
 reached its highest level, and the water begins to sink, the retreat of
 the fish carried along into these courses is cut off, so that they are
 easily caught.

Special Hunting Observances

224 The method of hunting by pursuit and the use of weapons is
 304 surrounded by all the Bushmen with various special usages and
 beliefs. Charms to ensure good luck in the chase are found among
 them all. With the North-Western tribes these most commonly take
 the form of scarifications serving to endow the hunter with the
 qualities of certain animals and enabling him to hunt them successfully.
 The cuts are made as a rule on the arms, sometimes on the cheeks,
 occasionally also on the back, chest, or belly. A tiny piece of meat is
 then burned to ashes, which are rubbed into the wounds. The meat
 [825] is that of an animal whose qualities are specially desirable, e.g. that
 of the springbok for swiftness. These cuts are usually given to boys
 soon after they begin to hunt, and are executed by old men who are
 themselves successful hunters. The cuts made between the eyebrows

¹ Barrow, op. cit. I, 390, 390; Lichtenstein, op. cit., II, 44; Alexander, op. cit., I, 137;
 Passarge, "Okavangopfeumfland," 697-8; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omahaka," 396; Dornan,
 op. cit., 106-9.

² [i.e., Fishing-Analyst]

- 764 is a deep hole, narrowing towards the top; its bottom is covered with small bushes, the corpse, wrapped up in its kaross, is laid upon these, then covered over with bushes, upon which finally small white stones are heaped till ground-level is reached. The surface of the
- [825] grave, like the corpse itself, is sprinkled with water mixed with vegetable "medicine"; this, says Seydel, is intended to keep jackals and hyenas from the grave. Children are buried in the same manner,
- [766] but the ceremony is simpler, only the nearest relatives accompanying the corpse to the grave.¹ Trenk gives some additional details.
- [775] The thickened sap of a certain small bush (*dawes*) is placed in the hands of the dead person, so that "his soul, when it reaches the 'evil spirit', may not do harm to other people, and will find rich
- [535] food in its other existence". At the funeral a fire is lit at the grave, round which is then held a dance accompanied by a funeral song; and all the women must weep for a day. A funeral feast follows,
- 765 in which honey beer plays no small part. A widow as a sign of
- [273] mourning cuts a round spot out of the hair over her forehead, a widower a parting directly over the middle of the head. How long the mourning lasts is not clearly stated, but, as we have already noted, a full season must elapse before the surviving partner may remarry.²
- 764 Among the Naron, as soon as a person has died those present
- [763] raise a short, very distinct cry which lets the whole camp know of the death. The body, wrapped up in the kaross worn by the dead person in life, is brought into a contracted position, the knees being bent up against the chest, the arms crossed and the hands laid on the shoulders, and is tied up like this with rope for purposes of transport. It is then laid near the fire, while the women howl and weep over it. Burial takes place as soon as possible after death. If this occurs at night, then on the following day; if in the morning, then on the same day. The grave is a deep, round hole, dug with the hands and digging-stick at a spot where the soil is not hard. Two or three men carry the body there, a man jumps in, receives it as it is lowered down by the ropes, and places it lying on the left side facing the east. Why this position is customary they do not know. The dead are buried in all their clothes and ornaments, and all their possessions are placed in the grave, or if too long, as in the case of a bow or spear, are hung on a bush close by. Then the grave is filled, and bushes or stones are thrown on top to keep the animals off. All the village
- [765] is present, and the women weep. Next day a near relative burns

¹ "Aus der Namib," 304.² "Buschleute der Namib," 169.

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heads, beset the entire distance with all kinds of imaginary obstacles 775
and difficulties; and even after all their labour on arriving at the
desired destination they will have nothing but flies to live upon."
This belief that after a time the dead arise and go to a land where
there is an abundance of good food is likewise recorded by Campbell [114]
and by Miss Currie, neither of whom, however, is a specially trust-
worthy authority. The Bushman informants of Dr. Bleek also
spoke of "the place to which the Bushmen go after death", but
unfortunately the details given by them have not yet been published.
We are unable, therefore, to tell if their ideas of a future life were in
any way similar to those reported by Stow and the other writers.¹

On the other hand, these Bushman informants also had a variety 821
of interesting beliefs linking up death with the phenomena of Nature. 761
The stars, they said, know the time when a Bushman dies, and the 775
fall of one announces, to those who are not aware of it, that something
bad has happened. When, after this, a "hammerkop" (*Scopus*
umbretta, the "lightning bird" of other South African tribes) flies, [825] •
calling out, over the camp, the people know that someone belonging
to them has died. When rain is accompanied by lightning, girls
who are out in the open become killed by the lightning and are con-
verted into stars, while those who are taken away by the rain become [824]
beautiful water-flowers, which will not allow themselves to be plucked
and disappear when approached. Such flowers must be let alone.
Hence the rule that young unmarried women and girls must hide
themselves from the rain. The Moon, again, is hollow (in its first
quarter) because it is carrying people who are dead. The human
heart is believed to fall down after death in the form of a shooting
star; the hair of a dead person is changed into clouds, while his gall
appears again as a green colour in the sky, and so forth. Dead 775
people may also come in their own forms as apparitions to their
relatives and friends, even in waking life. There seems, however,
to be no evil portent in this; nor, indeed, does there seem to be any
noticeable fear of dead persons on the whole, although we are told
that the names of those who are dead must not be uttered by children
at night.²

The Namib Bushmen, on the other hand, seem to fear dead people
greatly, and, as we have seen, the thickened *dawes* sap placed in the [764]

¹ Stow, op. cit., 129; Campbell, *Second Journey in S. Africa*, i, 29; Currie, "Bushmen of Namaqualand," 117; Bleek, *Bushman Texts*, 19.

² Lloyd, *Bushman Material Collected*, 21, 25; Bleek and Lloyd, op. cit., 365-71, 389-401.

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or other worship directed to these bodies.¹ How far the absence of moon worship must be attributed to the fact that these Bushmen have long been exposed to Bantu influence is difficult to say. In view of the comparative evidence afforded by the other Bushman tribes, however, as well as the fact that the Hiechware have certainly been considerably influenced by the BeChwana, this seems the most reasonable suggestion; although, as already noted, Dornan cannot be regarded as a fully reliable authority. [821] [782] [777] [114]

The evidence on the whole shows quite definitely that worship of the heavenly bodies, and especially of the Moon, exists among the Bushmen. In all the instances noted, the New Moon is prayed to; in the case of the Cape Bushmen for food, although the details of the ceremony are not available, while among the Naron, Auen, and IO Kung there is a special ceremony at which it is invoked for rain. There is nothing to suggest that the Moon is conceived of as a supreme deity, or that it forms the object of an elaborate cult. At the same time the prayers and ceremonies noted clearly constitute an act of worship. They must therefore be regarded as part of the Bushman religion. The prayers and usages relating to the sun and the stars among the Cape Bushmen suggest a wider sidereal worship, which the scanty details from the Northern tribes would seem to bear out; but the worship of the Moon seems to be by far the most prominent. [821] [771] [782] [776]

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In other aspects of religion and mythology there appears to be a good deal of variation in details among the different Bushmen tribes. The most prominent figure in the mythology of the Cape Bushmen is the Mantis, round whom a whole cycle of myths has been formed. Besides his own proper name, /kaggen, he possesses several others, as does also his wife, whose most usual name, however, is /huntu/katt/katten, the Dassie or Rock Rabbit (*Hyrax capensis*). They have three children, a daughter, of whom there is no further mention; a son, /gaunu-ts'axau (/gaunu is the name of a certain star, and ts'axau means "eye"), who in one of the tales is killed by baboons, and restored to life again by the Mantis; and another son, /kaggen-Opwa, the young Mantis, who also figures in one of the tales, where his likeness to his father is commented upon. Besides his own children the Mantis has an adopted daughter, /xo, the Porcupine. [773] [776] [184] [825] [825]

¹ Pygmies and Bushmen, 163.

773 Her real father is a monster named //khwai-hemm, the All-devourer,
776 but she does not dare to live with him, for fear of being eaten herself.
[821] She is married to /kwammanga, a mythical person not identified with any animal, but seen in the rainbow. They have two children, /kwammanga-*opwa*, young /kwammanga, who is brave and quiet like his father, and /*ai*, the Ichneumon, who plays an important part in the mythology, particularly in advising and assisting his grandfather the Mantis, and in chiding him for his misdeeds. All these, the Bushmen say, were once men and women, people of the Early Race which preceded the Bushmen, but now they are animals.

In their myths the Mantis is gifted with supernatural powers, yet often has a most stupid and perverse character; he is sometimes mischievous, sometimes kind, and is always getting into scrapes and unnecessary fights by his foolishness. He has the power of speech, which all his possessions share with him; he dreams, and his dreams come true; he foretells the ultimate future, when he and his comrades will all be animals; he can transform himself into various other animal forms, is sometimes killed, but always comes to life again. He also has creative powers. One myth relates that the Bushmen were formerly springboks, and were changed by him into human beings; another that he gave places their names; while he gives the bucks their colours and names and has them under his special protection. He can also bring people back to life again. But he is never prayed to, although, as we have seen, there are prayers to the Moon, who is also his creation. Nor is there any evidence of observances specially connected with him, apart from the mention of a "curious charm" made from the foot of the hartebeest and used by women for their children as a protection against him.¹

773 The Rain or Water, /kwa, is also acknowledged by these Bushmen
825 as a supernatural personage, and various beliefs and usages are directed
821 towards it. It is often represented as an animal; in the form of a bull it carries off a young maiden, in the form of an eland it was shot by a man of the early race with disastrous effects. It is thought
821 of most commonly, however, as an animal living in a waterhole,
825 and it is believed that wherever this animal goes, rain will fall. One
[789] of the principal methods of rain-making, therefore, is for the rain-magicians to drag this animal over as large a tract of country as they can, in order that the rain should extend as far as possible.

¹ Bloch, *Bushman Texts*, 6-9; Lloyd, *Bushman Material Collected*, 1-7; Bloch and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 1-37; D. F. Bloch, *The Mantis and his Friends*; *idem*, *Bushman Folklore*, 301.

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can, in order that the rain should extend as far as possible. Among the many rock-paintings left by the Bushmen in the caves and rock-shelters of their country there are pictures "of wonderful animals, such as certainly never existed; these the Bushmen of fifty years ago explained as Rain bulls, Rain animals. With them are often seen frogs, fish, tortoise, and snake, the animals protected by the Rain".⁸²¹
 Certain snakes found near a waterhole are believed to be kept in store by the Rain, and for fear of arousing its wrath may not be eaten by young unmarried men and women; nor may frogs be killed, lest drought ensue. When the Rain is angry with anyone, people may be carried off in a whirlwind, and various transformations effected. Young women are particularly exposed to danger from the Rain, and to avoid this they must observe various rules of conduct. They must propitiate the waterhole by means of *buchu* and *uo* (aromatic shrubs); they must hide themselves from the Rain; they must not snap their fingers at people, nor may they be spoken to against their wish, lest the anger of the Rain be thereby aroused. There are many legends telling how disobedient girls were punished, together with those around them, by the angry Rain, or were taken up by his agency in a whirlwind and transformed into frogs, snakes, porcupines, stars, water-flowers, etc. Such transformations are also illustrated in the rock-paintings. ⁸²⁵ [532]

The Rain thus appears as something to be respected or feared, since it has power to change people into animals and other objects, as well as to destroy with storms and terrible lightning. At the same time it also brings water and makes food grow. In connection with this latter aspect Miss Bleek says: "That Bushmen realized the life-giving powers of water is clear, as all tales of rebirth are connected therewith. The Mantis restores his son and his sister, the Blue crane, to life after they have been killed by throwing a part of their body into the water. In course of time this part grows up into the person to which it had belonged. In the same way he makes an eland of a shoe (perhaps a piece of eland's skin). An ostrich is killed; one of its feathers blows into the water and becomes a new ostrich." ⁷⁸² ⁷⁷³ ⁸²⁵

"Yet in spite of the Bushman's dependence on water and realization of its power," she goes on to say, "he does not represent it as a man or god. One instance is known to me of the Rain being addressed, when it is wrathful and lightens; but the first part of the speech is to the dead men who ride it:—" ⁸²¹ [776]

782
821
[539]

O gallopers,
O gallopers,
Do ye not know me?
Ye do not seem to know my hut.

Then they speak to the Rain itself:—

Thou shouldst put thy tail between thy legs,
For the women are looking shocked at thee;
Thou shouldst put thy tail between thy legs for the children.

The Rain seems here to be thought of as a magic animal ridden by spirits."

791 Certain magicians have power over the Rain, and can cause it
821 to come or stay away, as they please. These powers remain with
them even after death, and just as in life they are asked for rain, so
when they are dead, they may also be entreated to send it. Other
magicians have a similar power over the wind, /kawe, and are protected
by it. The howling of the wind is believed to forebode evil; it
tells the beasts of prey where to find people, and when it blows strongly
they can approach the huts unheard. In the mythology the wind
[773] is represented as having formerly been a man, which now wears
the form of a bird.¹

773 Among the Bushmen of Basutoland and the Orange Free State we
776 meet again with tales about the Mantis, differing but slightly from
[184] those of the Cape. He seems, however, to have been here the object
[794] of a definite cult as well. According to Arbousset, it was believed
that 'Kaang (i.e. /kaggen) or, as he was also termed, 'Kue-'akeng-
[761] 'teng, "the man (master) of all things," causes life and death and gives
[821] or refuses rain. All the animals have special marks which he has put
• [925] upon them; deficiency of game is attributed to him, and he is invoked
for success in the chase. He is also worshipped in times of famine
796 and before going to war, when the *mo'koma* or "dance of blood"
535 is performed all through the night. This dance Orpen's informant,
[773] Qing, described as follows: "Cagn (i.e. /kaggen)² gave us the song
of this dance, and told us to dance it, and people would die from it,
and he would give charms to raise them again. It is a circular dance
of men and women, following each other, and it is danced all night.
[786] Some fall down, some become as if mad and sick, blood runs from
the noses of others whose charms are weak, and they eat charm
medicine, in which is burnt snake powder.

¹ Bleek, *Bushman Texts*, 17; Lloyd, *Bushman Material Collected*, 9, 20-1; Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 195-9, 393-7 et passim; D. F. Bleek, *Bushman Folklore*, 307-9.

[104] ² In some orthographies, especially that used for the Zulu-Xosa languages, the symbol c represents the dental click, written / in the standard orthography for Bushman and Hottentot languages. Cagn is therefore merely another way of writing /kaggen; both represent the same sounds.

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medicine, in which is burnt snake powder. When a man is sick, this dance is danced round him, and the dancers put both hands under their arm-pits, and press their hands upon him, and when he coughs the initiated put out their hands and receive what has injured him—secret things. The initiated who know secret things are Qogne; the sick person is hang cāi.

Cagn, said Qing, was the first being and made all things—the sky, the moon, stars, mountains, and animals. The Bushmen prayed to him. On being asked how, Qing answered, in a low, imploring tone: "O Cagn! O Cagn! are we not your children, do you not see our hunger? give us food"—"and he gives us both hands full." To the further question, where Cagn was, he responded, "We don't know, but the elands do. Have you not hunted and heard his cry, when the elands suddenly start and run to his call? Where he is, the elands are in droves like cattle."

Cagn's wife was Coti. When asked where she came from, Qing said, "I don't know, perhaps with those who brought the Sun; but you are now asking the secrets that are not spoken of." These secrets he himself did not know—"only the initiated men of that dance know these things." Cagn also had two sons, Cogaṛ and Gcwi, and together with him and Cogaṛ there was another great "chief", Qwanciquṭshaa. All three had great power, but it was Cagn who gave orders through the other two. Of all these personages various tales were related by Qing. One of them, describing how Cogaṛ was killed by baboons and restored to life again by Cagn, is almost identical with the similar story told by the Cape Bushmen of /kaggen and /gaunu-ṭs'axau. In all these tales Cagn appears as a human being, but with supernatural powers. He can change himself into different forms, is then sometimes killed and eaten by animals or people, but always comes to life again. He possesses various magical charms, the strongest of which is his tooth; and the birds are his messengers who report to him what is going on. Occasionally he gets into trouble, from which he is extricated by Cogaṛ, just as in the Cape Bushman stories /kaggen is aided by /ni.

Another name for the Mantis among these Bushmen, according to Arbousset, is 'ngo. This may explain the following quotation from Campbell: "They had a name which they gave to God, who is above them, and another to God who is under them. The former is a male, the latter a female. The male God they call Goba, the female Ko; and her attendants are called Gauna." Ko ('ngo), as
 n [see category 116, p. 182 for the author's explanation of the 'initiated'.—Analyst]

776 "the Lord" or "the great captain", whom he identifies with Vedder's *Huwu* or *Hu's*. This "supreme being" is regarded as anthropomorphic, he looks like a Bushman and he also speaks Kung. He lives in the sky in a house with two storeys, the lower of which is occupied by himself, his wife, whose name is unknown, and many children, while the upper is occupied, as already mentioned, by the souls of the dead (*xa*). In appearance this house is similar to the ordinary Bushman hut, although not quite the same, and its exterior is "hairy like a caterpillar". Honey, locusts, fat flies, and butterflies are found here in superabundance, and the "great captain" feeds upon these; the souls of the dead, however, merely sit around and eat nothing. *Xu* summons the magicians to their profession, and gives them supernatural powers; he is the lord over rain and lightning, as well as over the spirits, *//gauab*, and through the chief of the latter he sends good fortune in hunting or in the collection of veldkos. If anybody thinks or speaks evil of him, he punishes the evildoer with lightning; otherwise he takes no interest in the doings of his "Bushman children", except when somebody swears falsely by him, for the Kung have a regular oath in which they invoke him. He is prayed to by them in fixed form for rain, in case of severe illness, before going out hunting or before undertaking a dangerous journey.¹

The Western Kung of Ukuanyama (Oschimpoloveld) speak of [184] *Erob*, translated by Lebzelter as "God", who, like *Xu*, lives in a house in the sky to which the souls of the dead are brought. He is [782] often prayed to, especially for rain and in hunting, as well as in case [224] of illness, "because he has made all things and can do everything and knows everything", and he is given the first offerings of the chase. The rain comes at his command as a mist out of the earth, [821] and then falls down, thereupon making thunder and lightning.²

821 *Erob* also figures as the "supreme being" among the Heikum of 184 the Etosha Pan, although in prayers for rain and in case of illness he 776 is addressed as *Xu*. The group in North-Eastern Ondonga speak [782] of the "supreme being" as *Xamaba*, the groups at Ukuambi know him as *Erob* or *Xuwa*, and the group at Uukualuthi as *Erob*; and among them all, as among the Eastern Kung, he lives in the sky in a house to which the souls of the dead are brought. Almost

¹ "Religiösen Vorstellungen der //Kam-Buschmänner," 407-9; *idem*, "Bei den !Kuh-Buschleuten," 13.

² "Religiösen Vorstellungen," 412.

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

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and he eats their hearts; he has forbidden people to eat the hare and the ostrich; he makes thunder and lightning; and the stars are his hearth-fire. Often he takes a star and throws it at a man, then the latter dies—a belief held in slightly different form by the Eastern Kung also, who regard a shooting star as foreboding the death of someone. Mention is further made of the "Saviour" or bringer of blessings ("Heilbringer") *Heiseb* or *Iseb*, to whom belongs the "benefactress" *Isee*, who gave the bow and arrow to mankind.¹ [184 776 (821) (761)]

The name */gamab* is also found among the Heikum of North-East Ondonga under the form *xamaba*. Here, however, Lebzelter speaks of *xamaba* as "the Supreme Being" who has made all things, including mankind, and who sends the rain. He is prayed to for rain, before a journey is undertaken, and in case of illness; he receives the souls of the dead in his house in the sky; he can be spoken to by the magicians, and he inflicts illness upon people whom he does not like. There is also an "evil spirit" *Heiseb*, "from whom comes the fire"; while in the bush there are said to be hobgoblins, */ga/ga hu*, but none of Lebzelter's informants had seen them, and their existence was doubted.² [192 (782) (775) (756) (753) (372)]

In the Eastern Kalahari, again, *Huwe* and sometimes *Thora* are, according to Dornan, engaged in a contest with an "evil spirit" variously known as *Gaua*, *Khauna*, or *Gauna*. He is the destroyer, the one who sends bad luck and disease, and is ever on the look-out to injure people. The Bushmen invoke the aid of *Thora* to defeat his attempts to injure them. He sends the thunderstorm and the lightning, of which the people are very much afraid; they will mutter to themselves, *Khauna ka rue ie ie*, "Khauna leave us alone." They look upon the lightning as his offspring, nor will they kill the lightning bird or hammerkop (*Scopus umbretta*) or rob its nest if they can help it. "Once in the company of a Bushman," says Dornan, "I wanted to shoot one of these birds, but he said it would be bad, and that Khauna would not like it, so I desisted." If a person is struck by lightning, he is supposed to have got in the way of the lightning bird when trying to rob its nest. "The religion of the Kalahari Bushmen," concludes Dornan, "is thus a kind of dualism in which two powers, one good, *Thora* or *Huwe*, and one bad, *Khauna*, are engaged in a struggle for the mastery."³ [192 (753) (777) (782) 184 776 821 825 • 771 776]

The word *Gauna* (*/gauwa*), finally, crops up again among the

¹ Op. cit., 410.² Op. cit., 410-11.³ *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 150, 153, 167-8.

776 honoured with certain ritual observances connected with the chase;
 [782] he is also prayed to for rain, before travel, and in case of illness;
 [224] and finally it is from him that the magicians obtain their special
 [756] powers. By the Eastern Kung he is said to have a wife and many children; among the other Kung and the Heikum he figures alone.

184 Few of these attributes are mentioned by Miss Bleek in her remarks
 776 upon *Hishe* among the Naron and Auen, and upon *Huwe* among the
 IO !Kung. But there are certain points of agreement. *Hishe* dwells in
 [775] a house in the east, to which the ghosts of the dead repair by day;
 [224] he is regarded as the creator, and as the protector of game and hunting.
 On the other hand *Hishe-Huwe*, sometimes alone, sometimes in double
 [881] guise as man and woman, sometimes "followed by children like
 [114] baboons", figures prominently in the boys' puberty ceremonies, which are not referred to at all by Lebzelter. At the same time, since these ceremonies certainly have much to do with hunting, their association with *Hishe-Huwe* is not inconsistent with his character as protector of the game and hunting, although of course it is hardly likely that this provides the only explanation for his figuring in them. Nor
 [782] is he ever prayed to among these tribes, save where the name *Huwe* is substituted by the IO !Kung for //nwa-se, the New Moon, in the prayer for rain. Most of the prayers for food and rain, however, are directed to the heavenly bodies, especially the Moon.

A closer agreement with Lebzelter's account is provided by Dornan's
 [114] discussion of *Thora-Huwe* among the North-Eastern Bushmen. *Thora* is here said to be the creator who is over all things, he sends
 [821] rain and game, plenty of food and good luck in hunting, certain
 [224] hunting observances are directed towards him, he wards off disease,
 [753] and protects the Bushmen from danger.

It is possible also to find a connection in certain respects between *Huwe* and the conception of the Mantis among the Southern Bushmen. Among the Cape Bushmen, it is true, the Mantis is primarily a mythological character, the central figure of an elaborate series of myths relating to him and his "family". He is never worshipped, but on
 [782] the other hand, like *Huwe*, he has creative powers, and is also said to
 [825] have made certain bucks and to protect them. Mention is further
 [775] made by these Bushmen of an afterworld to which go the spirits of the dead, but there is nothing at all to link this up with the Mantis, just as there is nothing to link up the afterworld of the North-Eastern Bushmen with *Thora*. The resemblance between the Mantis and *Huwe* is far more noticeable among the Bushmen of Basutoland.

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RELIGION AND MAGIC

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776 among the Heikum of the Etosha Pan /*gamab* makes thunder and
[821] lightning, the stars are his fire, and he kills people by means of shooting
stars. The Naron and Auen term a strong and howling wind // *gaua*,
[825] while sometimes // *gaua* is said to be a bird which makes the wind.
[777] Finally among the North-Eastern Bushmen *Khauna* is the source of
[753] bad luck and disease, is injurious to people, and sends the thunder-
[821] storm and lightning, the latter being regarded as his offspring. Further
[825] the "lightning bird", intimately associated with him, is feared and
may inflict death by lightning when molested. Here again we get
[753] the general impression of // *gaua* as the source of illness and death,
acting through the medium of the storm, lightning, and shooting
stars.

184
776 In all this // *gaua* offers certain points of resemblance with the
821 conception of the Rain held by the Cape Bushmen. Among the
latter the Rain is definitely personified, it appears in their myths
as a supernatural personage, generally in the form of an animal,
and here it is said, "the Rain thunders, the Rain lightens." When
the Rain is angry with anyone, people may be carried off in a whirl-
wind and various transformations effected; the howling of the wind
forebodes evil; and numerous observances have to be kept in order
[761] not to anger the Rain and thereby provoke death. There is also
[775] the belief that people killed by lightning are changed into stars;
shooting stars are omens of death; the wind is sometimes spoken
[825] of as a bird; and the flight over the camp of the *Scopus umbretta*,
known to the North-Eastern Bushmen as the "lightning bird",
here announces the death of someone. In this connection it may be
added that among the Namib Bushmen thunder and lightning are
said to command great reverence, and a person struck and killed
by lightning is believed to have suffered death as a punishment for
some past misdeed.¹

184
776 In some cases, among the North-Western Bushmen, // *gaua* shares
certain of the attributes vested in *Huwe*. This appears most strikingly
among the Heikum of North-East Ondonga, where *Huwe-Erob* does
not figure at all, his place being taken by *xamaba*, who has most of
the powers and privileges attributed to *Huwe-Erob* by the other
[782] Heikum and the Kung. Among the Heikum of the Etosha Pan
[755] we find prayers addressed to *Erob* for rain and in illness, but at the
[775] same time the "demiurge" /*gamab* is mentioned as the creator who
[821] receives the souls of the dead. Further, as we have just seen, /*gamab*

¹ Seydel, "Aus der Namib," 104.

756 supernatural powers, or who are able to control, either for social purposes or for their own ends, the spiritual forces upon which the social welfare depends. There is no English word which adequately describes them, but such persons may be loosely termed magicians.

Among the Cape Bushmen, these magicians, who might be of either sex, were called */gixa* (plural, */giten*). There is unfortunately [114] no information available as to how they acquired their powers, nor have we any clear description of the part they played in the life of the community. A few details about them may, however, be gathered from the texts collected by Bleek and Lloyd. Some magicians were [821] rainmakers, who went out to catch the rain bull and lead it over the land bringing rain. Others, again, had special powers over particular [825] game animals, such as the springbok or the ostrich. Some magicians were able to assume and go about in the form of animals such as the lion, springbok, jackal, or a little bird; others, even when asleep, knew what was going about at night, and took care of the people, defending them from evil magicians. For some magicians could [757] cause illness by shooting with invisible arrows, and the patients would die, even though doctored; while some were said to eat the flesh of the dead. When a magician died an earthquake took place, [823] and his heart fell, as a shooting star, out of the sky into a waterhole. His powers, however, he continued to possess even after death, [775] for there are mentioned several occasions on which a dead rain-maker was asked to send rain or a game magician to give success in hunting.¹

These beliefs, fragmentary as they are, show definitely that the magicians were held to possess supernatural powers, which they might use for good or evil; but, apart perhaps from the making of rain, there is nothing to link them up with any cult or public ceremony, or to indicate that they ever played the part of priests.

[184] Among the Naron and Auen, however, the magicians, as we have seen, function at the puberty ceremonies. They introduce [881] *Hisha* into the dances, and make the cuts between the eyebrows of the boys. [793] Among the Naron they are also the priests, who pray to the New Moon for rain; while among the Auen they make rain by sprinkling [821] on the ground a kind of red earth, which they fetch from afar and carry about with them. The magicians, both male and female, are

MAGIC AND MAGICIANS

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also the doctors of the community. The millipede, said to belong to *Hiske*, is only touched by them; they dry it and use it powdered as medicine. [756] [825]

Naron magicians (*isho k'au* or *inu k'au*) do not dress or live differently from the rest of the community. "No one would know them apart," says Miss Bleek, "nor do they seem to have much influence to-day." The Auen seem to have many more magicians than the Naron, by whom they are looked up to in magic matters. Here, [184] according to Kaufmann, the magicians, (*isho k'au*, *inu k'au* or *!geixa*) have their skulls shaved clean, and also carry a few ornaments which may not be worn by other people. The magic art in both tribes is learned by apprenticeship. During the month of the puberty ceremony one or two boys are taught their trade by the old magicians. [868] At the next ceremony they return and are taught more; and boys who have been with a magician for many years can when they become older succeed their master.¹

Magicians among the Kung are of two kinds, and both are called in especially for illness. The *ju k'au*, who sucks out the disease from the body of the patient, is "an evil person, who speaks to no one and always looks black"; while the *!ue k'au*, according to Vedder, is the ordinary worker in magic and the poison-mixer, and also prepares medicines from herbs and roots by cooking.² [184] [755] [278] Lebzelter gives further information about the magicians. Both men and women can be summoned by the "great captain" to exercise this [787] calling. The power they receive from him is greater than that of all the spirits with the exception of *nawa*, and is equal to that of the latter. Magicians are thus "born and not made", to use Lebzelter's expression, but nevertheless it appears that they have to learn the secrets of their calling by apprenticeship. They accompany the old magicians at least once in the search for medicine plants, and are then subjected to a test. The old magicians in the customary manner attempt to cure a sick person by sucking out the "disease poison" ("Krankheitsgift") or the "spirits of disease" from the body of the patient; then they administer all the "disease poison" extracted by them to the initiates. If the latter do not die from this treatment, they have satisfactorily passed the test!

The magicians, apart from being able to cure illnesses by banishing the "spirits of disease" from the body of the patient, also have the [787]

¹ D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 28; Kaufmann, "Die Auen," 159.

² "Grammatik der !ku-Buschmannsprache," 8-9.

DANCING AND MUSIC

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shoulders, or holding his arms out behind her, without touching her. In other dances the men dance round alone, then approach the line of singers, holding out their arms. The courting motive is clear, though not indecently expressed."¹ Stow, however, describes certain dances of the Southern Bushmen which he stigmatizes as lascivious and orgiastic, and in which, he says, "the women appear to have offered themselves up to sexual congress."² There are several suggestions also that the eland bull dance, as well as various others imitating the sexual life of animals, may assume a pronouncedly erotic character, but these suggestions are conveyed as a rule by our authorities in the form of generalized statements obviously based on hearsay, and lack concrete illustration. [114]

Most of the dances appear to be based on episodes in the lives of wild animals; the dancers imitate the animals, and go through the actions characteristic of them. Several of these dances, observed by Fourie among the Heikum, may serve to illustrate their general character. In the Jackal and Wolf dance, in which only the men take part, a hyena is represented feeding on a carcass and keeping off a couple of hungry jackals. Every now and again, as the latter attempt to approach too close to the carcass, the hyena scares them off and they jump out of the way. The Horse dance is likewise danced by men only, who go round quickly in a circle, while the women clap their hands in imitation of the sound made by a galloping horse. The Gemsbok dance, again, represents a gemsbok bull, cow, and calf being chased by two men with three or four dogs. The bull and cow carry horns but the calf does not. The buck lead and are followed by the men and dogs, who dance to and fro on the flanks until the animals are brought to bay. Then the men pretend to shoot, bows and arrows being represented by sticks, and one of the buck goes down wounded, while the others make off pursued by some of the dogs. The wounded animal fights in realistic fashion, sweeping at both men and dogs with its horns. The dance is continued until all the animals have been accounted for.³ 535 825

Among the Southern Bushmen the dancers often made themselves up to represent various animals, birds, and imaginary monsters, with the aid of either paint or the skins, heads, and horns of the objects to be represented. In many of their dances "they were so dressed as to represent a particular animal, when the dance was called by its name; such was the *i'Gorlo'ka*, the *Man-nia*, or Baboon dance, in

¹ D. F. Bleek, loc. cit.² Stow, op. cit., 115, 118-19.³ Op. cit., 96.

535 which the performers imitated all the actions and droll grimaces of
825 rival baboons, springing, gambolling, and running upon all fours, chattering and grimacing like a troop of excited simiadae. Another, and one which also appeared a favourite amongst them, was the 'Kloo-rou-o, or Frog dance, in which they squatted, and leaped, and rolled about like a lot of inebriated batrachians. A third of this kind was the 'Oi, or Bee dance, when the company transformed themselves into a swarm of bees, and performed their evolutions with a buzzing chorus. "On special occasions," Stow continues, "they held a general masquerade, when each one took the disguise or head-dress of some particular bird or animal, and upheld the character during the performance. This appears to have been considered one of their grand national dances, and was reserved for their high festivals; it was one which even their greatest artists delighted to depict, and probably it had some hidden meaning known to the initiated."¹ It is not unlikely, as Stow suggests, that such dances were also of a ritual character, but of their function and relation to the social life generally hardly anything is known.

526 Games are often played in the evenings too, by grown-up people
535 of both sexes as well as by children.² A favourite game of the women, found among the Southern Bushmen, as well as in the north, is a ball game which is almost a dance. The players stand in a line [533] clapping their hands and singing a wordless tune. One of them dances about opposite the others with a melon or round tuber in her hand. At the end of the tune she throws the ball to the player at the right hand of the line, who dances out to catch it, and herself dances back to the left end, where she joins in the singing and clapping. The next player does the same, and so the game goes on till all have had several turns. Sometimes, again, they play at the capture of 524 brides by young men, as among the Naron, or at games based on 536 animal experiences, as among the Heikum. One of the latter, for instance, represents how a white monkey was once seen by a woman who ran home and told the others. "The part of the monkey is taken by a woman who stands with her hands covering the sides of her face, leaving only a small opening for peeping through. She sways her head from side to side. The other women form up in a row opposite to her. One goes forward to look at the monkey, gazes at it intently and, when the latter starts moving its head from side to

¹ Op. cit., 117-18.² Stow, op. cit., 97-102; Kaufmann, op. cit., 149-50; D. F. Bleek, op. cit., 18-21; Fourie op. cit., 97-8.